

An abstract painting with a dark, moody palette. The background is a mix of deep blues, purples, and blacks, with horizontal brushstrokes suggesting a landscape or a body of water. In the foreground, there are large, vibrant red and orange shapes, possibly representing flowers or leaves, which are layered over the darker background. The overall texture is rich and painterly.

CURRY

Arts
Journal
2008

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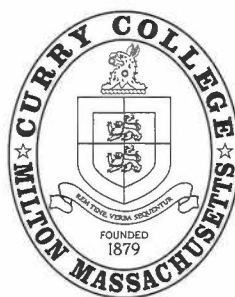
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Editors' Note

Our purpose as editors of *Curry Arts Journal 2008* is to celebrate the creative skills of the many student writers and artists who have contributed to this edition. In the year-long process of overseeing all the submissions, selecting pieces for publication, and showcasing student work, we have acquired experience through practice and expanded our skills in critiquing, editing, design, layout, publicity, and events planning. The *Curry Arts Journal* is a student-based publication which is considered special within our community. We hope to increase the size of our team and make the *Journal* more successful each year.

Curry College is filled with talented writers and artists whose skills are needed to enhance the quality of the *Curry Arts Journal*. We highly encourage all Curry students to submit literary and visual artwork on any and all subjects. Submitting a piece is a great learning experience and having it published is a significant recognition and achievement. If your submissions do not appear here, do not despair. We strongly recommend that you, along with any new artists we haven't heard from, submit your work for the next publication. Additionally, we call on faculty members to help motivate students to join in the fun and get published!

The *Curry Arts Journal* offers two practicum courses taught by Professor Karen D'Amato. Practicum I and II allow students to explore the many aspects of producing a literary arts journal. Students may enroll in both courses earning a total of four credits per semester and eight credits during an academic year. Participating students experience a range of responsibility that influences the *Journal's* content, including corresponding with students concerning their submissions, arranging workshops with student authors, editing final selections, and planning events.

As editors, we were also responsible for a variety of public relations activities, including writing content for flyers which publicized upcoming events. We held one open mic each semester, inviting students to read different genres of their writing and to

listen to the works of their peers in an intimate setting. The fall event was an evening coffee house surrounded by candles, coffee, and desserts. The open mic included singer songwriters and performance artists as well as poets. We would like to thank Dave Ortendahl, Assistant Director of Student Activities, for providing the space and enlisting the College Activities Board (CAB) to set up the event. We also thank him for inviting us to collaborate with CAB on other successful fall events, including an inspiring workshop and performance by spoken word artist Marc Marcel. The spring event was a well-attended reading and luncheon that took place in Levin Library. In addition to showcasing this year's *Curry Arts Journal* authors and other student writers, it also included faculty amongst its readers and allowed students the opportunity to learn more about the *Journal*, Practicum courses, and the English major. We would like to thank Library Director Hedi Ben Aicha and Humanities Chair and English Coordinator Susan Peterson for their enthusiastic support of and participation in this event.

Another step in publicizing the *Journal* was classroom visits. Each member of the course presented to classes to inform students of upcoming events and/or workshops. All editors were responsible for promoting events and discussing the Practicum class along with encouraging students to submit their best work. To this end, we invite students who wish to improve their writing to attend our workshops. The workshops are collaborative meetings where editors and authors share revision ideas and discuss editing suggestions.

On the subject of collaborations, we would like to thank Assistant Director of Student Activities Joseph DiMaria for approaching us about including *Curry Arts Journal* selections in the 2008 yearbook. As last year, we were happy to share selections and pleased that many of this year's writers and artists have found a wider audience and second home in the yearbook. We heartily encourage other innovative suggestions from this and other student organizations in the future.

Concerning the *Journal's* production, we have again received valuable help from individuals at the Office of Institutional

Advancement, namely Christine Adduci, '07, who for the second summer in a row worked wonders with layout and production; photography assistant Brian Winchester, who expertly photographed the artwork; and designer Rosemarie Valentino, who, unflappable as always, oversaw the project.

In closing, we wish to thank the following individuals for their great help with this edition: literary faculty judges Jeannette DeJong, Dorothy Fleming, Armand Inezian, Sandy Kaye, Jeannette Landrie, Lori Lubeski, and David Miller for their time, their sensitive reading of texts, and their useful comments toward revision; faculty editors Armand Inezian and David Miller who generously extended their commitment to include detailed comments on student texts and editing and proofreading before press time; and visual arts faculty judges Laurie Alpert, Iris Kumar, and Elizabeth Strasser for their time, expertise, and encouragement of student artists. This year, we would especially like to thank Iris Kumar for guiding her students in their creative cover designs and for consulting with us during the selection process. We would also like to thank Jeannette DeJong and D-L Garren for bringing this year's play, *The Interview*, to our attention and for encouraging playwright Paul Varga to send it to us. A pleasure in its own right, the play also includes a dedication that speaks to art's restorative power. We will leave it to you to read and ponder.

We also wish to thank Professor Dorothy Fleming, Coordinator of the First-Year Writing Prize, for forwarding this year's top essays for our review. Two first-place and one honorable mention essay appear here with the authors' consent. We are also happy to have received permission from many of the other winners to consider their essays for the 2009 edition. Our thanks also go out to Professors Sandy Kaye, John Murray, and Karrie Szatek who along with Professor Fleming selected these insightful pieces.

Our thank yous would not be complete without acknowledging Hedi Ben Aicha and his library staff for providing the practicum with a friendly meeting place as well as access to a library computer lab; Paula Cabral, Senior Administrative Assistant for the

Humanities Department for her indispensable help with *Curry Arts Journal* events, production, and distribution; the Student Government Association for its continued commitment of funding; and Fran Jackson and Rosemarie Valentino of the Office of Institutional Advancement for their commitment of time and resources to the publication of each new edition. Finally, we would like to thank Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs Susan Pennini, Interim Associate Dean Lisa Ijiri, Humanities Chair and English Coordinator Susan Peterson, and Writing Program Director Sandy Kaye for their continued support of the practicum. The structured, for-credit arrangement encouraged us to stay on task and enhanced our dedication to process and product. After reading this edition, we hope you will agree that due to our collaborative efforts and the community's endless support *Curry Arts Journal 2008* is a quality student publication full of diversity, originality, and heart.

Sincerely,

Brittany Capozzi

Peter Demas

John Everett

Kathleen Keohane

Michelle Morgan

Daniel Brady Roach

Brett Trachik

The *Curry Arts Journal* Editors

We would like to dedicate this edition to

Professor Marlene Lundvall

October 11, 1936 - March 24, 2008

A Visual Arts professor at Curry for nearly forty years,
her teaching, dancing, and artwork
enlivened our community and inspired many of the students
whose artwork has graced these pages.

Early Morning

By Alex Cheplick

It's quiet, it's peaceful

Soft insect noises

Clear, calm waters

The wind waking up with a slight breeze

The grass veering back and forth

The fog slowly rising from the ground

The sun's horizon shifting up

The fog spreads its wings over the rocky cliffs

Slowly expanding

Sitting and looking over the Charles River

I keep an eye on the Harvard rowing team

Their oars moving in a constant rhythm

The sun shines a light on the water

And reflects upon their rowing arms

What a beautiful day

A beautiful day

Passion

By Michelle Morgan

What Is Passion?

"Nothing has ever been accomplished without passion" reads the poster over my bed that reminds me each and every day to reach little farther and push myself to achieve this "passion" everyone talks so fondly about. Passion is that urge to get up every day with the motivation and excitement to add to a piece of art, to finish the last verse in a song, or shoot the winning basket in the last second of the basketball game. We all have our defining moments when our determination is tested and we rise to prove, not only to ourselves but to the world, our abilities. The poster itself is a close up of a rose of vibrant crimson with petals as crisp as a newly fallen leaf. In the center of the rose, the folds are tightly wrapped around each other, and they open up slightly until the outside petals extend out and it's in full bloom. I start to wonder, how can something as simple as a rose stand for something as complex and undefined as passion? Some are born knowing their passion, but I, along with most of the world, am less fortunate.

The idea of passion can manifest in different ways. It can be presented in a loving and supportive way. At my high school graduation party, a relative of mine, a successful salon owner, simply told me to *find* my passion. "No matter what it is, if you enjoy doing it, everything else will magically fall into place," she said. On the other hand, passion can be presented as something frightening. My advisor in high school gave a rather intimidating speech, saying that *college was it*. College would be where my life would be changed. After college, my advisor continued, I would enter the scary *real* world, a grown up place without fun or free time.

Finding Passion in College?

So what if I didn't know what my passion was or where to find it? What if I wound up just drifting along? These were common concerns of mine, and I'm sure, of every first-year student

across the world as well. I am now a junior and have worked my way closer to what I feel my passion in life is. It has not been an easy road and it's been filled with disappointments and challenges, but it has all been worth it.

When I came to college, I was shy and overwhelmed with my new lifestyle, a large campus, no parents, and new friends. Since Curry doesn't offer Journalism as a major, I chose to major in Communication with a concentration in Journalism, but one problem with Communication was public speaking. I would panic when I had to stand in the front of a classroom to give a speech and most certainly didn't have the amount of leadership skills others had, which made me wonder if I was even in the right major. Studying communications has helped me break out of my shell. By forcing myself to volunteer in class and using the techniques drilled into me to conceal my fears of public speaking, I have gained the confidence to accomplish things I thought I wasn't capable of. But was this my passion?

At the time, I was headstrong about going into the field of Journalism and writing for periodicals. I felt like this might be my passion. I even tried minoring in Health because I thought I wanted to write for Health journals. As I took more focused classes, I realized that I did love to write but didn't think I would like being put under the pressure of strict deadlines every day.

I chose to minor in English instead. I joined the *Currier Times* newspaper staff and found myself really enjoying the production aspect of the paper. My cousin works in publishing, and I began talking to her about her job and continuously asking her questions and learning more about the profession, and the more I learned, the more it intrigued me. With that and through my studies, I decided I would like to go into the publishing field following graduation. Perhaps publishing was *it*. Maybe this was my passion.

Publishing is a competitive business so I knew it was vital to try to get an internship for the summer. I was confident in myself and determined, and after several companies turned my resume down, I ended up getting my first real professional interview at a well known publishing company in Boston. This was extremely nerve-racking, but I maintained my poise and, even though I did not have a lot of experience, tried to convince them that I was the

right candidate. Unfortunately, even with my strong drive, the company did not see me as their perfect intern. I never got that internship, but I didn't want to give up either. It only pushed me harder for next summer. This is a good sign.

I decided to take on a second minor, Applied Computing, so I could learn important publishing applications such as InDesign and QuarkXpress. I completed the Experiential Learning class where I perfected my interviewing skills and learned everything there is to know about obtaining an internship. I now feel my biggest drive in life is not to be underestimated, and I will continuously strive to achieve beyond everyone's expectations.

Is Passion a Process?

This poster of the rose has hung over my bed for the past three years now, consistently reminding me of what could lie ahead. Just when I feel like throwing in the towel and giving up, like when I didn't get the internship, a glance at this poster helps me to stay focused and work even harder towards discovering my passions.

Is publishing my true passion? I don't know. But maybe that's the problem. Over time, I have considered the issue of passion, and I'm beginning to think that it might not be a simple, black-and-white thing. I have begun to consider that in the same way that a rose is always growing and opening, passion is a process. A continual evolution. Is the image of a fully blossomed rose nothing more than illusion? Maybe no one's rose is ever complete. Life is full of twists and turns that make it impossible to commit to one thing for your entire life. It is possible that what we once knew so well could change over time. The truth is learning is continuous, and the more we learn, the more likely we are to find a new passion. For some a mid-life career change can create multiple roses, and it is important to know we all can build up from the dirt again as long as we know the ways to flourish.

Scribbles

By Amanda Surette

Writing on a blank page,
the pen does the work for me.
Trying to force the plastic in a new direction,
the ink spells the words by itself.

The cursive letters begin to intertwine
unaware of the next sentence.
The only one who can fill in the blank lines
is the pen itself.

My life is written in an unknown manner,
scribbled and scratched out.

I cannot erase the past,
but the future
is an empty journal.

A Life Undone

By Brittany Capozzi

For Matt Walsh, August 29, 1987 - August 29, 2007

A young man with a boyish charm does not get to see today. He is not able to feel the chilly breezes one after the other across the blades of grass. His ears will never hear the crickets break the tranquility of the night. His dreams lay forever sleeping, forever untouched.

As I settle myself on the ground under the oak tree, I script the date, *September 3rd, 2007* in my journal. The shadows of the emerald and cucumber-colored leaves cascade over my head and darken the ground as I write. As speechless as I have been for the last four days, I know that writing about my friend's death will help me cope with the tragedy.

In twenty years exactly, he achieved more dreams than most do in a lifetime. He tied and double-tied his goals one after the other and aspired to create new ones. He was well known for being an actor of the theatre. He played versatile character roles throughout his teenage years. In roles ranging from the comical sewer man in Jean Giraudoux's *Madwoman of Chaillot* to the serious and distressed Ross in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*, Matt showcased his charm on stage. Many will remember him as being a captivating singer as well, who studied different genres of music. As his deep voice conveyed the powerful notes from the song "Believe" at his last Christmas concert, it evoked tears throughout the audience. His aura was shaded gold as he released sparks of charisma into the atmosphere.

Like the legendary Shakespeare, he too died on his birthday.

To flutter his eyes open, smelling the scent of pancake batter being cooked for him will never be. He will never again be tickled by the joy of laughing with loved ones until it hurts. A hug cannot be felt by him, nor can a kiss wake him.

Nature balances opposing factors such as life and death and give and take. Philosophically, this phenomenon is looked at as the yin and yang of life. If this is so, then why can't the moon of the night heal the perilous marks made by the day's sun?

The pocket in his casket, made of white fabric, holds eternal memories of his interests. They will continue to comfort him forever. The permanency of *never* and *forever* is unfathomable. The light-colored rosary beads will remain in the palms of his hands as prayers are whispered tangibly for him. As time moves forward, more prayers will be sent out into the air, each one adding a rosary bead in spirit.

But here and now, a single leaf flows effortlessly through the air, surely falling from the palm of an angel's hand. Why now?

He was so young.

Why couldn't he continue to climb after all and finish his award-winning story?

Note: "I Continue to Climb" by Matthew Walsh was published in Curry Arts Journal 2006. An honest, hopeful exploration of his experience with cancer, it received first-place recognition in the 2006 First-Year Writing Prize competition.

The Interview

By Paul Varga

Dedication to Matt, Spring 2008

Little does a playwright get a chance to see a character embodied to perfection. I had the pleasure and the gift to see that happen just over a year ago. With the talent of any movie or stage actor, with the grace and presence of any academy award winner and the personality of a saint, Matthew Walsh brought the character of Mr. Angelo to life. In one of his last performances at Curry College he sent chills rolling up and down my spine as well as many in the audience. He truly was an angel.

Since Matt's death, I have been hesitant to look at this piece of work. I am not sure why— maybe because I would have to face directly the death of a classmate, maybe I would have to face my own mortality. However, after another round of e-mails from the Curry Arts Journal and the suggestion by several very persuasive professors, I decided to give it another look. As I did, I came to the conclusion that instead of hiding this play because of the memories attached I should share it because my hand had been guided to capture the spirit of a man who lived life to the fullest, who taught more with a smile than I could ever imagine. With his own strength and hope he gave so much strength and hope, not only to the people that he came in contact with but to the community at large.

Matt, although you are not here with us physically, you have left an impact that will forever lighten my heart. I feel that we met before we ever came in contact, and I dedicate this play not to your memory but to your everlasting spirit that not only inspires me but an entire community. I thank you and your family, and now forever the spirit you have shared will be enshrined and shared with generations to come. Enjoy the view, Matt. Enjoy the view.

Characters:

Jose Smith: 28 - Tall and slender. Wears nice suit and tie. Go-getter. Inquisitive, not shy. Looks confused.

Mr. Angelo: 50 - Yet looks no definite age. Wears primed white suit and hair is grey. Walks with confidence and knowledge.

Jenny: 24 - Pretty, long hair, in shape. Wears provocative professional clothing.

Setting: A large conference room. Walls are decorated with different sorts of pictures. Window on back wall looks out onto blue sky with puffy clouds. Walls are taupe with a gold trim. Fake plant next to window is painted with a hint of gold. Next to fake plant sits tall bookcase full of pictures of dead celebrities. Bookcase has gold trim. In middle of stage is a large table with gold trim. Chairs line around table. On stage right wall sits a coat rack. Door on stage left has light changing from white to red throughout the play.

JENNY

(Walks into room from door on stage right to door with white light shining through window) Your next appointment is here, Mr. Angelo.

MR. ANGELO

(Offstage) Thank you, Jenny. Please see him in and help him get situated.

JENNY

Yes, sir. *(Walks back across stage and opens door stage right)* Right this way. Mr. Angelo will be with you in a moment.

JOSE

(Enters) Sorry I'm late. There was a terrible accident. Traffic tied up for blocks and blocks.

JENNY

An accident?

JOSE

Yeah. Dump truck slammed into some car. Right outside your building.

JENNY

That's awful.

JOSE

What a mess... Ambulances. Police. Didn't you hear the sirens?

JENNY

Not really. We're pretty cut off from the world way up here.

JOSE

(Looking around) Nice place. Is this Mr. Angelo's office?

JENNY

No. Just the conference room. Mr. Angelo prefers to screen his applicants out here. *(Crosses to JOSE)* May I take your jacket?

JOSE

Why, yes. Thank you. *(Smiles)*

JENNY

(Walks behind JOSE and slowly pulls off jacket, feels his shoulders and arms) Oooo... You're all tensed up from that accident. Can I get you something to drink? Coffee? Tea? Me?

JOSE

What?

JENNY

Just kidding. *(Hanging jacket on a hook behind on the door)*
I can tell you work out. You are in very good shape, Mr. Smith.

JOSE

(Shifts body) Thank you, my wife and I run every morning.

JENNY

Well, you know, if you get this job, you might be working very late.

Sometimes we might even have to stay overnight. Maybe we can go get a drink later and talk about our favorite jogging routes.

JOSE

Oh. Thanks anyway. Drinks and jogging dates are purely for me and my wife. And overnights away from home are pretty much out of the question.

JENNY

Up to you. It's a free world. *(Smiles as MR. ANGELO enters from white-light-filled door with folder in hand)* I will be seeing you soon. Nice to meet you, Jose. *(Jenny exits quickly stage right)*

MR. ANGELO

(Clears throat) You must be Mr. Smith. *(Walks toward JOSE)*

JOSE

(Stretches out hand) And you must be Mr....

MR. ANGELO

Angelo. *(Walks past outstretched hand and pulls out two chairs from conference table half-kitty-corner to one another and the audience)* Sorry, I'm coming down with a cold. Wouldn't want you to catch it. Please sit. *(JOSE sits)* Thank you for coming down so fast. We just got your resume and we really wanted to meet you.

JOSE

(Nervously) Well, I am just glad you called—*(beat)* I didn't know you had my resume.

MR. ANGELO

Well, we like to say we have everyone's resume. *(Smiles)*

JOSE

What?!?

MR. ANGELO

Just a little joke, Mr. Smith. *(Smiles)* Now, I have a few questions for you. No need to be nervous. Just answer truthfully and honestly. *(Takes reading glasses out of breast pocket, puts them on and opens file)* After all, it's not a matter of life or death.

JOSE

(Fidgets in chair) Yes, sir. I'm ready. Fire away.

MR. ANGELO

(Peers down nose) Well then, let's start, shall we? *(Looks down at paper)* Full name.

JOSE

Jose Anthony Smith.

MR. ANGELO

Age?

JOSE

Twenty-eight.

MR. ANGELO

Married? Single? Children?

JOSE

No children yet. Married to a beautiful woman named Katie.

MR. ANGELO

Ah, yes. Katie

JOSE

Do you know her? *(MR ANGELO points to JOSE's resume)* Was that in my resume?

MR. ANGELO

(Interrupting him) Moving on. Do you see yourself as being religious?

JOSE

Not terribly. *(Eager to please)* I try to live a good life as much as possible. *(Beat)* Isn't that a personal question?

MR. ANGELO

Personal?

JOSE

And not to sound rude, but...your secretary said some things that made me a bit uncomfortable.

MR. ANGELO

Uncomfortable? I'm sorry. I'll talk to her about it later. *(Shuffling through folder)* I only asked about religion because sometimes you might have to work Sundays and I wanted to know if there was a conflict.

JOSE

(Relieved and a bit amused) No problem.

MR. ANGELO

Fine then. Moving on. Why did you want to work for us?

JOSE

Well, I feel I can bring my own values, beliefs, and a certain amount of knowledge to this company.

MR. ANGELO

I see. Have you ever worked in Human Resources? We have an immediate opening for the director's position.

JOSE

Wow, that sounds great! What type of skills are you looking for in that department?

MR. ANGELO

We're looking for an insightful individual, Jose. We need someone with a good sense of reading people.

JOSE

Well, I think I'm a pretty good judge of character. And with a background in psychology and in communication...

MR. ANGELO

We need someone who can dive deep. Someone who can screen applicants and also keep an eye on the work force.

JOSE

How so?

MR. ANGELO

Well, in the past, certain...undesirables...have seeped into this company. We'd need you to keep a close watch on the workers and weed out the ones who are...not appropriate.

JOSE

Not appropriate?

MR. ANGELO

Well, earlier this year, we had some trouble...

JOSE

What kind of trouble?

MR. ANGELO

Well, there was this woman. Very pushy. You know the typical Hispanic type.

JOSE

But, Mr. Angelo...I'm...

MR. ANGELO

And it's not just those wetbacks. We had some Muslim employees...

JOSE

Muslims. I see. And what did THEY do?

MR. ANGELO

The usual. Refused to conform. One woman wouldn't take off her head scarf. Next thing you know, they'll be praying in their cubicles. It's just not professional.

JOSE

I see.

MR. ANGELO

We also had some problems with our Negroes. And, what do you call them? ...Chinks.

JOSE

(Measuring up Mr. Angelo and the situation) You mean African Americans and Asian Americans?

MR. ANGELO

You know THOSE people. We had some thefts in the office. We thought it would be a good idea to let them all go. So, in case any apply in the future, we'd need you to screen them out. *(Offers JOSE a candy from a candy dish on the table)* By the way, you're not gay are you?

JOSE

(Waving away the candy) You're kidding about all this. Right, Mr. Angelo?

MR. ANGELO

We're just trying to run a business. Just like any other hard-working outfit. Oh. Did I mention people with any sort of disability? A lot of the time people can hide that stuff, and you really have to test them.

JOSE

(Clears throat) Excuse me, sir.

MR. ANGELO

(Smiling) Ah, yes. You probably want to know your pay scale. This is a big job. How does \$95,000 a year sound for starters?

JOSE

Well...

MR. ANGELO

No. You're right. With your credentials, we could go another five. That WOULD put you in the six-figure bracket.

JOSE

(Sternly) Sir, do you realize what you are asking me to do?

MR. ANGELO

What? A pay cut? Well, \$105,000 is about as high as we can go.

JOSE

I'm sorry, Mr. Angelo. *(Stands)* I'm really not your man for the job.

MR. ANGELO

What do you mean?

JOSE

(Walks past MR. ANGELO and grabs coat, trying not to raise his voice)
You're talking serious discrimination here, Mr. Angelo.

MR. ANGELO

Come on, Jose. These are "unspoken rules." Everyone's got them. There's no legal liability...

JOSE

(Beginning to rise to the occasion) You're talking prejudice. Bigotry! Those people you've "screened out" were probably just as good as any employee here. Some probably better. Discrimination is against the law. And, with all due respect, it's also REALLY bad for business!

MR. ANGELO

(Still calmly) Let me be the judge of that, Jose. Why don't you step into the inner office, and we'll process the paperwork.

JOSE

Mr. Angelo, let me put it to you clearly. I'd rather die than work for such a company. *(Grabs door handle)*

MR. ANGELO

(Oddly amused) You'd rather die...?

JOSE

Just a figure of speech, Mr. Angelo. I'd rather sit in that traffic, while they clear that wreck downstairs, than spend another minute here. *(Tries to open door but only handle moves; MR. ANGELO watches in silence as JOSE tries a few times unsuccessfully to open door)*

MR. ANGELO

We can't let you go, Jose.

JOSE

What?!? What IS this?

MR. ANGELO

You can't go back, Jose.

JOSE

What?!? You can't hold me here!

MR. ANGELO

You can't go back, Jose. *(Pause)* No one can.

(JOSE lets go of the door handle, turns, and looks at MR. ANGELO)

JOSE

(Slowly) What do you...?

MR. ANGELO

Jose, what type of car do you drive?

JOSE

A 2004 Chevy Impala. Why?

MR. ANGELO

What color?

JOSE

(Slowly) Blue.

MR. ANGELO

Now think back. What kind of car was hit in that accident?

JOSE.

(Softly) A blue Chevy Impala. *(Now speechless)*

MR. ANGELO

Most unfortunate accident. *(Taking off glasses and putting them away)*
A young man on his way to *(looks at JOSE)* a job interview.

JOSE

(Stunned, JOSE walks slowly to the window and gazes down) Are you telling me...?

MR. ANGELO

(Gently) No one could survive an accident like that, Jose.

JOSE

Whew! Do you mean I'm ...? Well, I'm...?

MR. ANGELO

Yes, Jose.

JOSE

(Near to surrender, but not quite) What about my wife? I just kissed her goodbye an hour ago. *(Beat)* *(Walking slowly back to chair)*
So, what IS this place? *(Sits)*

MR. ANGELO

This is what you might call "an examining room." You know, where folks come to be tested.

JOSE

What kind of test?

(JENNY enters stage right wearing white choir robe and white head scarf)

JENNY

Think of it as... kind of a Placement Test.

MR. ANGELO

Started the moment you walked through this door. First with Jenny...

JENNY

(Smiles sweetly) Sorry about that.

MR. ANGELO

We needed answers to some questions. Like do you honor your commitments? Do you keep your vows?

JOSE

(Catching on, looking at Jenny) Do I cheat on my wife? *(Smiles)* Not much of a test. Not if you knew Katie.

JENNY

You'd be surprised. *(JENNY walks by JOSE, lightly touches him on the shoulder as she passes, and stands next to Mr. ANGELO)*

JOSE

(Getting it) So. Wait. All that stuff about...Muslims...Jews...people of color...? And that crazy salary?

MR. ANGELO

Fear and greed, Jose. Fear and greed. Major test for a lot of folks.

JOSE

So I ...

JENNY

(Smiling) You passed just fine.

JOSE

And my wife?

MR. ANGELO

(Stands up) All in good time, Jose. All in good time. *(Walks toward office door)* Love is stronger than Death.

JOSE

(With bleak look) No! No, I don't buy this. This can't be.... It just can't be.

MR. ANGELO

It will be okay, Jose. Please, you have to...

JENNY

Jose, please settle down. This is real, you know this is real. Everything will be okay. It's not an end, it's a beginning.

JOSE

(Stands up, composes himself, and walks with Jenny to the door) I think *(beat)* I think I'm ready.

JENNY

Are you sure?

JOSE

(Smiles confidently) Yes, I am.

MR. ANGELO

Right through here, Jose. *(Taking JOSE's arm)* Step into my office. *(Opens door)* I think you'll like the view.

(Lights dim low. Mr. ANGELO opens door and bright white light floods stage. JOSE walks through door, followed by JENNY. Harp music and the sounds of happy laughter can be heard. MR. ANGELO takes handle of the door, exits slowly shutting door behind him. Stage goes black and after a few moments white light slowly dims till stage is in total blackout.)

CURTAIN

Cedarwood Park

By Steve Tagarelis

There is a place I used to know; now it's just a memory
So long ago, I still can recall what it meant to me
A million pictures of what it all looked like at each hour of the day
Where the sun was, where I would play

Each season brought its own unique setting
It used to be mine, but I won't be forgetting
The field, green, bare, or under a blanket of snow
The calm and the wind, stimulating every sense as I let go

The optimism of spring, damp grass and leaves
Or the smell of wet pavement in the street
Empty streets where we could play all day
Still stained with the blood of scraped elbows and knees

Summers spent playing baseball by the rusty backstop
I can still feel the heat burning, the temperature would never drop
It was the only place where we could hear
A soundtrack of birds and cicadas filling the air

Autumn was best with its colors and dying leaves
The woods went next into the careless breeze
I could feel it all sliding away into winter
Pickup football and Halloween, even the sounds of that nearby stream

Winter always hit and I loved it then more so than now
Sledding down the hill under a purple night sky
Into the field, a tundra of snow and ice
I'd stay out there as long as I could; the cold air stung a lot less than it should

From the earthworms and pine cones
To where planes flew through the shifting sky
Looking through the woods to distant lights on the other side
I remember my home, it was all mine

I could always see the stars at night
I could always see the moon
I've heard crickets chirp, and echo through the air
I've seen fireworks, satellites, and even comets up there

The morning view from my window
Was a picture no other window could beat
I've got memories upon memories upon memories
Of a place just beyond the street

And though it looks different, I know it's still the same
I can't help but wonder if it will ever be mine again
Or just belong to my memories from all those years I spent
Seventeen to be exact; I want to go running back

I miss the swings and spray painted slides
I miss the feeling I'd get from the fireflies
We spray painted lines on the crude basketball court
I remember my fingernails covered in dirt

It's been so long, I miss it so much
I wish I could stop this life and rewind
Forget about now, turn around, and go home
It was and still is everything I've ever known

I heard, I saw, I smelled, I was a part of this place
I don't go a day without remembering its face
That chapter is closed, but in me it still exists
And to be there again is my only wish

The Killing Wind

By Kristin Hubbard

It took awhile for me to realize what was going on.
I mean I was standing there, but it wasn't exactly me.
I looked around for some control, but the wind threw me around
and took all the control I had thought was mine.

I was freezing, wet, and my clothes clung to me like plastic
wrap and I couldn't breathe.
I wasn't about to turn around and walk away.
But there wasn't any more I could do.
I had taken this life, and now I had to face what I had done.

If the rain would stop, if the wind would not push me as
it had my car, I may be able to think. "Leave me alone!" I screamed.
I stared at his body on the side of the road, where my car had hit him, as
the dark threatening night cast shadows around me.
His soul had flown through me leaving me more alone than ever.

When all became silent I heard the beating of my heart
and knew everything had come to an end.
I was alive, this wasn't a dream, and what I had done will haunt me forever.
I had taken this life, and now all that remains is this killing wind
laughing at me in a devilish howl.

Beautiful

By Meredith Byers

Those porcelain blue eyes,
the gorgeous ones that even the sunrise
finds a reason to be envious of,
bring a smile to these pale lips.
The tears I once cried no longer exist
and the bleakest picture is beautiful when I feel your kiss.

It's the sweet smell of your hair that I miss
when I hold my pillow close and exhale
getting ready for one more day.
Never would I have believed I could lie down and feel this way—
I could cry knowing I won't feel your warmth for days
but still smile through salty tears at finding someone who feels the same.

My heart is falling for you over and over again
and the words are on the tip of my tongue
as I hold you as tight as I can
wanting to feel like something to someone.
Your slow smile is leading me through a lonely night.
For once I feel alright, and you're the only star I'm wishing on tonight
because all the stars in the sky couldn't make me feel
the way you do when you tell me you love me
in the cold twilight.

The Last Silversmith

By Daniel Brady Roach

The Silversmith Saga: Village of Fear is a novella in progress that tells the story of Roy Silversmith, a freelance vampire hunter obsessed with avenging the death of his family at the hands of a particularly gruesome vampire, and Amy Mercer, a young militiawoman whose home village has been overrun by the very same vampire. Roy and Amy live in a post-apocalyptic future in which a massive comet has struck the earth and caused the continents of the world to fuse together into a single landmass not unlike in prehistoric times. Furthermore, the comet released an alien substance into the atmosphere that blocked out the sun on one corner of the planet, resulting in the creation of the Darklands, a paradise for vampires and other evil entities where the sun never rises, and the Brightlands, the last safe haven for humanity where night still gives way to day. In this chapter excerpt entitled "The Last Silversmith," Amy is introduced to Roy for the first time by Jamal Reaver, the local lawman of Roy's home of Mavtown, and to Youla Aphrodisia, owner of the Stakes & Hammers Inn. Can Amy see through Roy's bitter loner act to find the tormented hero inside? And can Roy get over his inner demons long enough to help her out? Let's find out...

The interior of the Stakes and Hammers Inn was a loud and boisterous place packed to the breaking point with customers of every shape and size imaginable, brightly lit by overhanging electric lamps. Amy, who had never been allowed inside an establishment of this sort before, marveled at all the sights it had to offer, even as her unofficial chaperone, Jamal, tried to his best to guide her past things he felt she should not see. Rugged-looking men and hard-as-nails women sat at large round wooden tables scattered across the hardwood floors, each of them carrying a huge tin mug of beer overflowing with froth. Attractive tavern wenches dressed in ruffled skirts and tight bodices carried trays of hot food to their customers as they engaged in every manner of bar activity imaginable. She giggled at the sight of grown men and women singing and dancing drunkenly, finding their sluggish movements and slurred voices hilarious. Jamal had to literally drag Amy

onward by the hand whenever she came across something too interesting to pass up, including but not limited to, a game of strip poker between five men and one woman (which the woman was winning), several drinking contests, a dart competition, and a bizarre, tabletop game of life and death between two captured animals, a spike-backed spider and a lizard bat. When Amy did finally stop dawdling, it was not because she had lost interest in the tavern's occupants but because she had collided face-first into something very soft and firm, the unexpected impact causing her to fall flat on her rear end.

"Owwwww..." Amy moaned, rubbing her sore buttocks as she looked up to confront whatever it was she'd crashed into.

"Hehehe, you okay, hun?" asked the very attractive, raven-haired woman Amy had bumped into.

"Uh, yeah, I'm okay, Miss... I'm REALLY sorry about that..." Amy stuttered as the lady helped her to her feet, the apprentice militiawoman's face beet red from the realization it had been this woman's rather large bosom she had so carelessly bumped against.

The woman was older than Amy, somewhere in her mid-twenties, and possessed the fullest, curviest figure the southern Brightlander had ever seen. This impressive figure was rendered even less difficult to miss by virtue of the skintight, bright red evening gown she wore, complete with a slit up the side to show off her long, pale white legs and a neckline that sported a considerable amount of cleavage. The woman's hands were covered by long black gloves, but not nearly as black as the long, curly hair which tapered down her bare back like the mane of a wild mare. The woman smiled, displaying perfectly white teeth behind her rose-red lips as she fanned herself with an elaborate lady's fan with silver trim. She had her emerald green eyes fixed upon the young militiawoman, eyes which radiated a warm, gentle mirth as well as a hunger Amy was not too familiar with...

"Oh, pish posh, no harm done," the woman assured her, brazenly thrusting her chest out for emphasis, making young Amy blush even more furiously than before.

"Just consider yourself lucky you're not a man, sweetie, or I'd have to assume you did that on purpose and put the hurt on ya. Say now, how about you make it up to me by working with me and my girls in the tavern for a little while? We're short-handed this week and we

could use a cutie like you to bring in the customers. Why don't you come upstairs with me to my office and we can discuss the details in private..."

"AW, HELL NO! YOU'LA, YOU CARNIVORE, BACK OFF!" shouted Chief Reaver as he finally caught up to Amy and her new acquaintance, having been held back by a couple of drunks who'd wanted him to stay and sing with them.

"Awww, come on JR, we were just gonna talk a little business, big deal," Youla pouted sincerely to the militia chief, though at the last second she raised her fan in time to conceal a mischievous grin as wide as that of the cat who swallowed the canary.

"Yeah, and Darklanders drink milk and enjoy long sunlit walks on the beach in the middle of summer," Jamal murmured sarcastically, confused Amy watching from the sidelines, not truly comprehending what Jamal thought he had saved her from.

"Party pooper, you're just jealous," Youla teased, fluttering her eyelashes coyly at Jamal to rile him up even more.

"Seriously, Youla, the girl's name is Amy and her hometown has been overrun by a Darklander strong enough to ward off an entire militia; she came here to ask for Roy specifically."

At that last bit of information, Youla's playful demeanor vanished and became cold and serious, but only for a moment as she regained it just as quickly, sighed as though she were being asked to perform a great chore, curtsied and replied, "In that case, it would be the esteemed pleasure of I, Madame Youla Aphrodite, owner of this fine establishment to show you to his table. Follow me, Sir and Miss."

Jamal rolled his eyes at Youla's act, even as Amy eagerly applauded her for her grace and poise as she led them gracefully past all the other tavern goers and directed them to a table at the head of the bar. A circle of cheering men and women had gathered around the table in question, placing bets of silver coins on the outcome of what was obviously an arm-wrestling contest between two seemingly uneven opponents. At the left end of the table farthest from the bar was a shirtless, tattooed giant, a man, taller even than Jamal and easily dwarfing the six-foot man sitting at the right end of the table with his back to the bar. The two of them had their elbows on the table and were waiting for the barkeep, who seemed to be acting as referee, to give the okay to begin the match.

"Wow...Is that big guy right there the Silversmith? He's HUGE!! No wonder my parents wanted me to hire him..." Amy marveled, deeply impressed by the living goliath she beheld before her, counting the number of tattoos imprinted upon his back.

"HA! Muscleman there wishes he was, girl! The man you're looking for is his opponent," Youla informed Amy as they both turned their attention back to the match, and more importantly to the "David" sitting opposite of "Goliath."

The shorter man wore a wide-rimmed cowboy's hat and had long, straight black hair which was even darker than Youla's and wore a large grey overcoat over his slim, but strong build. He wore an eye patch over his right eye, but the one he left uncovered was an icy blue that seemed to pierce through anyone who dared try to look directly into it, including the now breathless Amy Mercer. Could this young man, who seemed to be barely older than her, possibly be one of the legendary Silversmiths her parents told her of when she was a baby?

"Alright, you know the rules gentlemen, you can only use one arm throughout the match, no kicking under the table, no moving your elbow from the tabletop..." droned the makeshift referee as he listed the rules off his fingertips.

"Just get on with it, Dennis, and have the drinks ready for when I beat this clown," spoke the man Youla claimed was the Silversmith, his voice calm and boyish, but with an edge to it that could cut diamond.

"Oh right, right...Roy.... Try not to kill this guy, alright?" the barkeep/referee asked of the man he called Roy as both combatants locked hands and prepared to grapple.

Roy Silversmith smiled grimly and said, "No promises..."

"You're going down, one-eye!" shouted Roy's mammoth opponent, a trail of drool dripping down onto the table as he flexed his muscles in anticipation of the match.

"Ready...FIGHT!" shouted Dennis as the match got underway, the crowd gathered around them going wild all at once, crying out in unison for the man they betted on to win.

The muscleman's tree-trunklike left arm bulged profusely as he struggled with all his might to force Roy's considerably smaller right limb down onto the table in defeat, but to no avail. To the amazement of the immense tattooed man, and everyone else who was not familiar with the

Silversmith and the rumors surrounding him, Roy's arm did not budge from its spot even an inch; it stood straight and firm as a steel girder. It was almost comical to watch Roy's opponent grunt and sweat as he tried and tried to bring Roy's arm down, a task which should have been quite simple given how his hand alone was large enough to encompass his hand and wrist. Roy meanwhile just yawned in boredom, the kind of yawn you would expect from someone who was watching a terribly dull play and longed for it to be over. Roy's opponent, infuriated by his nonchalant attitude, broke the rules of the game and tried using both hands to bring Roy's one exceedingly strong one down. However, even the combined strength of both titanic arms were proven useless, as Roy let out a deep sigh and ended the match once and for all by slamming both of his opponent's arms, along with his entire body, straight through the table.

Those who had been rooting for Roy called out his name in chorus as they collected their winnings while those who had been foolish enough to bet against him cursed bitterly as they surrendered their money.

Roy meanwhile glanced down at his fallen opponent, the impact with the floor sufficient enough to knock him out cold, and called out, "Hey everyone, since I beat this guy he's paying for the next round of drinks, enjoy!"

"Aahh," Dennis moaned worriedly at the destruction of the table even as he went to take everyone's orders, fearful that his boss, Youla, would take it out of his pay. Fortunately for him, Youla was too busy introducing Amy to Roy to care.

"Ehem, Sir Roy Silversmith, drinker of beer and smasher of tables, I hereby introduce you to the fair Lady Amy, she who does not look where she is going," Youla jeered in a surprisingly serious and gracious sounding voice.

"Hey," Roy replied in response, simply nodding in Amy's direction to acknowledge her existence while he grasped the cold mug of beer Dennis had just provided him.

"Mr. Silversmith, I'm Amy Mercer and you have no idea how big an honor it is to meet you!" Amy squealed excitedly despite the seriousness of her mission, extending a hand in greeting to Roy, but not receiving his in return.

"She's come a long way to see you, Roy; least ya could do is hear her out," Jamal urged.

Roy took one long chug of his drink before replying, "How far?"

"Lost South far, Silversmith."

"Stakes and Hammers, girl must have a death wish if she's been living out there all this time," Roy mumbled back, though his interest had indeed peaked at the mentioning of the most secluded land in Nod.

"That's just it, sir. It's a matter of life and death. My town has been overrun by a really strong vampire and our militia can't handle him. My parents sent me to recruit the Silversmith family to eliminate him!" Amy blurted out, despite frantic hand signs from Jamal, some kind of warning she did not comprehend in time.

Roy's one good eye seemed to shut tight in pain for a moment at the mention of the word family, but opened up again to fix Amy with a cold, intense stare as he sneered "Heh, couldn't have been a very strong militia if all it took to bring it down was one bloodsucker. And for the record, I'm the only Silversmith there is. The others left this shitty mortal coil a long time ago. You'd have known that if you'd bothered to do a little research before coming here, or if your town had kept in contact with the rest of humanity instead of blowing them off to go live off in the middle of nowhere like a bunch of cowards running from their problems."

"Our town founders wanted to give us a home free of fear and the threat of the undead, is that so wrong? The Lost South had always been uninhabited by anyone but us and the occasional stray vampire who wandered into our territory in search of easy prey or a place to hide from their enemies; we'd never had a reason to form a particularly strong militia.... Until five months ago..."

"Expect the worst to happen and be ready for it; that's the only way to stay alive in the crappy world we live in, kiddo."

Amy was beginning to get angry with Roy's devil-may-care attitude, not at all the knight in shining armor she was expecting to meet, and exclaimed, "And how exactly were we supposed to prepare for a Darklander who could shrug off everyone we could throw at him as though it were nothing and tear through our town's best defenders as though they were rag dolls? I don't care if you're the Last Silversmith or one of many, my town needs you!"

"I can't help ya," Roy stated bluntly as he finished off his drink. "Wha... WHY NOT!?" Amy exclaimed in shock, "I have money to pay you with, lots of it! My family's life savings!"

Roy sighed in annoyance, drained the last of his beer, and answered, "Because, Mercer was it? If it really took you five months to get from where you were in the south to here in the west, and if the vampire you speak of is as powerful as you say, then in all likelihood your family is already dead. I can't and won't accept money for a rescue mission that I know for a fact is doomed to failure before it has even begun. Hell, if your townsfolk were the only people living there to begin with, then the bloodsucker has probably already moved on to better feeding grounds—vamps don't stick around to smell the roses after a kill. My advice to you is to move on with your life, or, if you insist on going off on a wild goose chase, hire someone else; this town is full of morons looking to make a name for themselves and get rich in the process. Goodbye and good luck."

And with that, Roy Silversmith rose to his feet, his one blue eye seething with a quiet rage that equaled or perhaps even surpassed the undisguised outrage on Mercer's face as he swiftly left the tavern.

Once the Silversmith had gone, Amy's rage quickly transformed into despair as she fell to her knees and wept, crying out, "What am I going to do now!? What about my family!? They still need help! WHAT AM SUPPOSED TO DO!?"

Youla dropped her fan as well as her usually lustful disposition and exchanged it for a sisterly one, taking Amy in her arms and rubbing her back in an attempt to comfort her.

Youla looked to Jamal knowingly and said, "Jamal..."

"I know, Youla, I know, I'll get him back here, though lord knows it's not gonna be easy..." Jamal promised as he swiftly ran after Roy, knowing all too well that the Silversmith rarely changed his mind about something he felt strongly about, especially when someone had done something to put him in a bad mood, unintentionally or otherwise.

Meanwhile, just outside the threshold of Mavtown's entrance, more strangers had arrived... of a much more sinister sort. Like demon apes they traveled through the trees common to the Bright West, their shadows enough to frighten all life forms they came across, from timid squirrels to mighty owls. They had been tracking the girl for months like

pack of blood hounds at their sire's command, their orders to bring her back to Sorrow's End at all cost and kill anyone who got in their way.

They ceased their swinging once they came close enough to see the lights of Mavtown and the two border guards at the main entrance. They were shaped like men, but their eyes glittered red and their fangs glistened with saliva at the scent of fresh, mortal blood just over yonder.

"Grrrr, the girl's trail ends here... This must be Mavtown. My dad used to tell me stories of this place when I was little," one of the tree-limbing monsters voiced to his comrades.

"Well, what he say about it?" asked another with a mouthful of chewed-up squirrel.

The first monster shrugged and answered, "Just that the place is supposed to be swarming with mavericks, vampire hunters for hire, a strictly no vampire zone. That's all I remember though, almost makes me regret eating my dad after I turned..."

"It does not matter. The girl is there and that's where we must go," the Blackheart commands," replied a third, making ready to leap from his tree branch like a monstrous frog to ambush the guards below.

"Yeah, but do we really want to enter a town run by professional vampire killers? Every Tom, Dick, and Harry down there is likely armed with silver of some sort," a fourth pointed out thoughtfully.

"Heh, who you more afraid of? He who took our lives and those of our loved ones in a single night and restored us anew? Or a bunch of stinkin' mercs whom anyone of us could kill with one good hard bite to the throat?" the zealous number three pointed out.

"Hmmmm... Good point, let's get em!" the fourth exclaimed as the pack of undead dropped down from the trees upon the hapless guardsmen like leaves from hell.

Only one lingered behind, one who hung upside down like a mighty bat from his tree perch, one whose eyes shimmered with bloody tears as he wept, "Amy... I'm so sorry..."

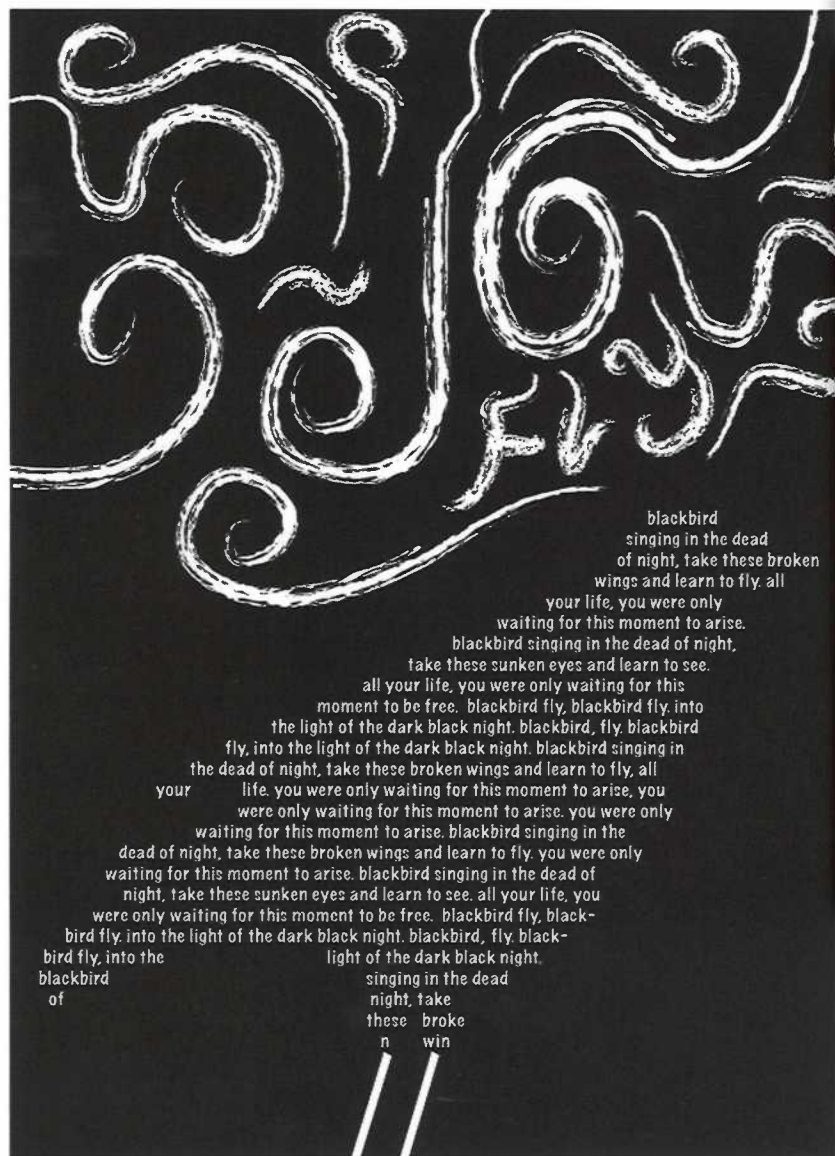
That Moment!

By Jonathan Bowers

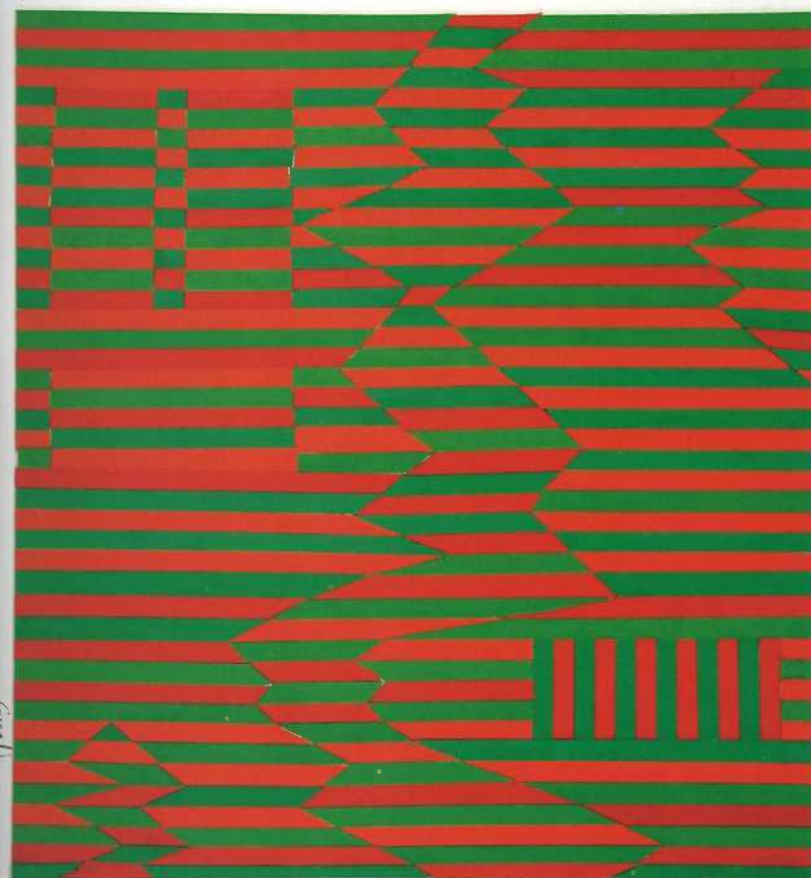
Flares, not the blinding emergency flares
But the spinning on an axis
With your legs spinning like windmills in the air flares.
Push!
Push up from the ground to spin like a human top
Spinning upside down, *Look, Mom, no hands!*
Spinning on your head as if the neck was going to pop!
No, Mom, not break-pop but POP!
Pop-lock and Drop it,
Each movement with every ounce of energy to
Pause, Pop uhh then Lock!
Lock on to the audience
Even if it's you watching yourself in a mirror
Moooooving,
Slowing down in between the beat not with it
As if riding underneath a wave,
A wave of music!
Now slide,
Slide smooth and easy like gliding on ice,
Giving the illusion of no gravity holding you down
Down
Down to the ground to hold your last pose
To show the crowd that *Yeah, this is me,*
And yes I just did that!



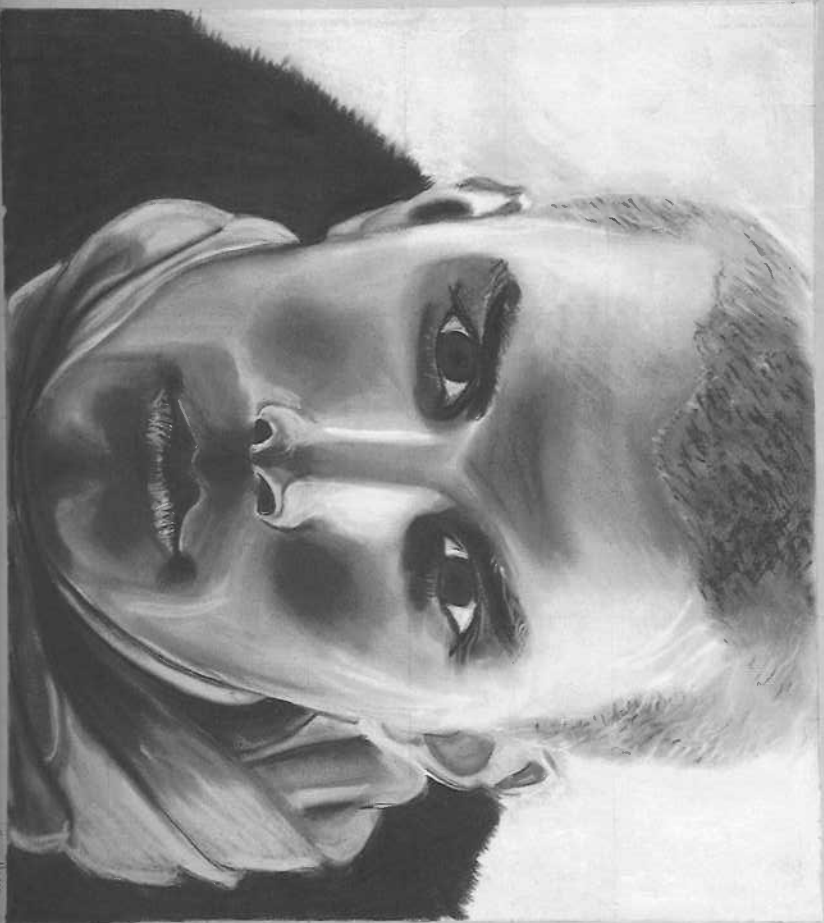
Carnival
Gillian Hynes
Mixed Media on Canvas



Blackbird, Fly
Kasey Richards
Digital Imagery



Untitled
Greg Nasca
Collage



Untitled
Greg Nasca
Conte Crayon



Theme for Ernie
Ed Mega
Black and White
Photography



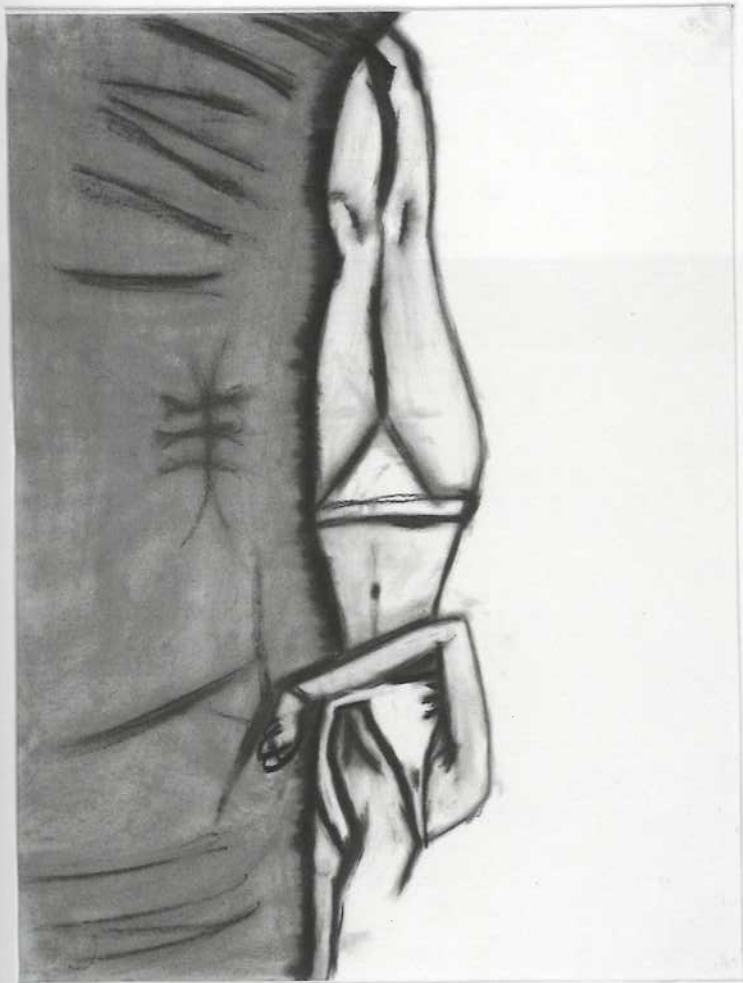
Flower Top
Nancy Marotta
Ceramic



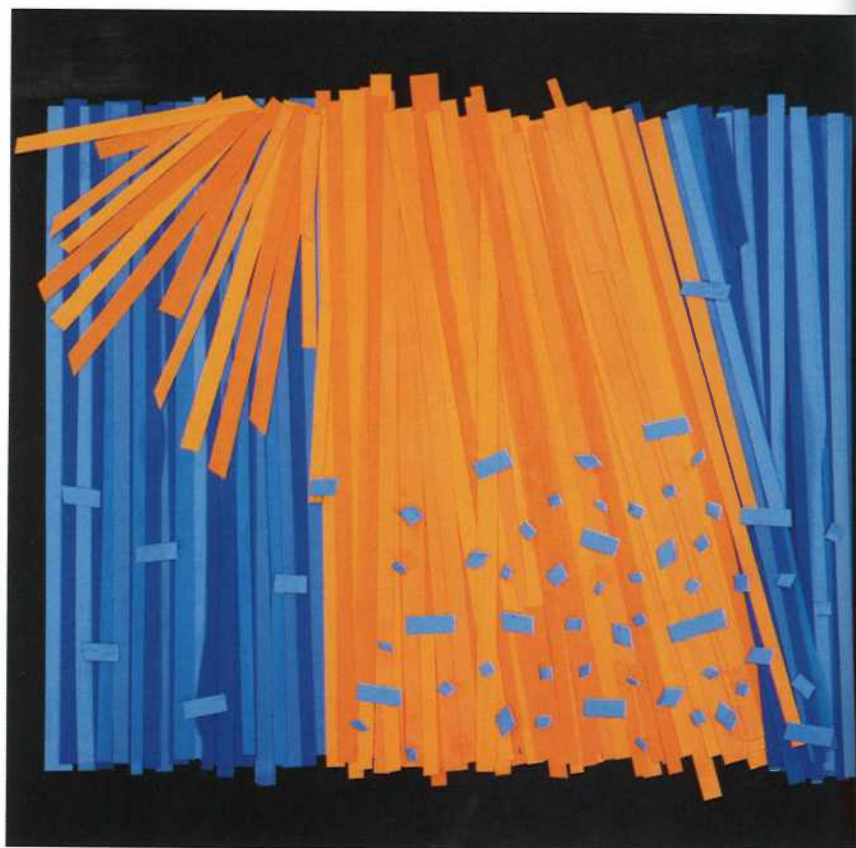
Earth Pot
Isabelle Rene
Ceramic



Imperfections
Tara Jean Goffart
Color Photography



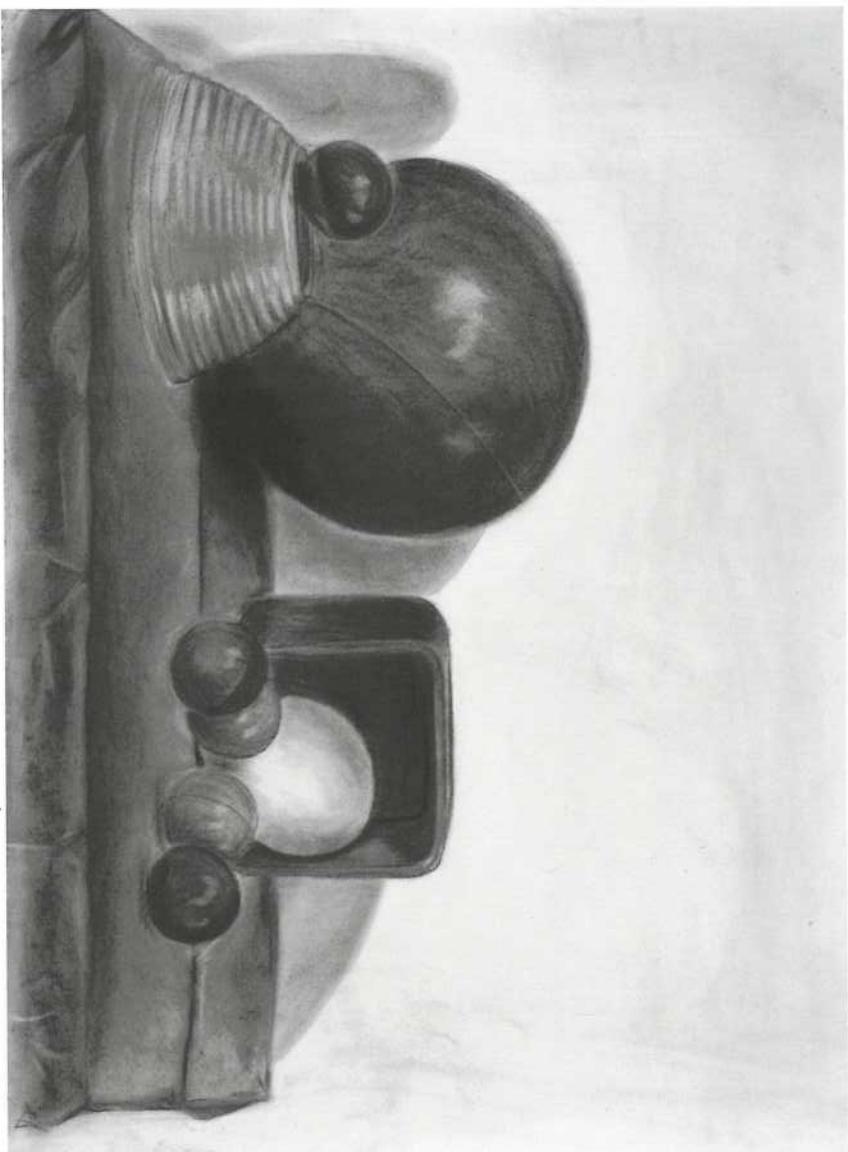
I Won't See You Tonight
Christopher Dorman
Charcoal Drawing



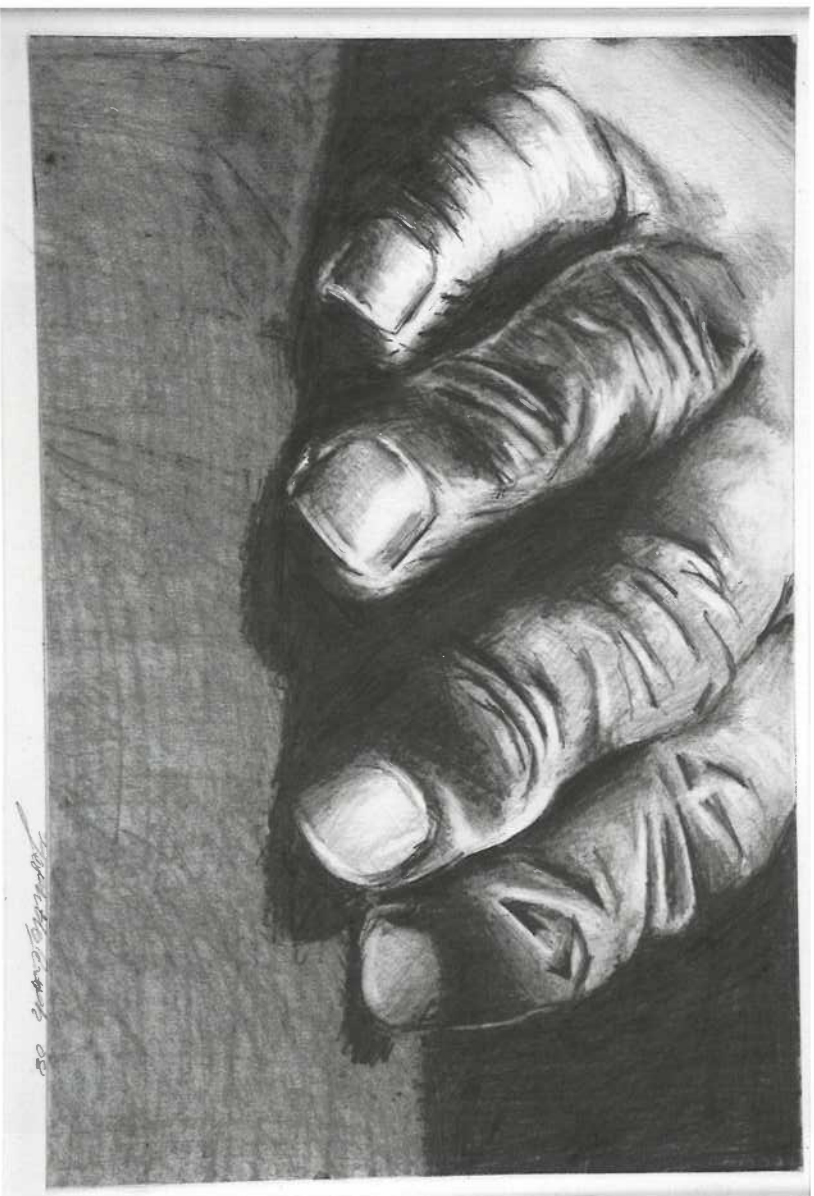
Sun Shower
Shannon Alsem-Cashman
Collage



Michael's Fish Tank
Gillian Hynes
Acrylic on Canvas



Still-Life
Andrea Melchiorri
Charcoal Drawing



Broken Hand
Jephthe Joseph
Pencil Drawing



Inside Out
Catherine Martin
Ceramic



There's a Place
Sarah Tower-Dukeshire
Mixed Media

Night Fishing Alone

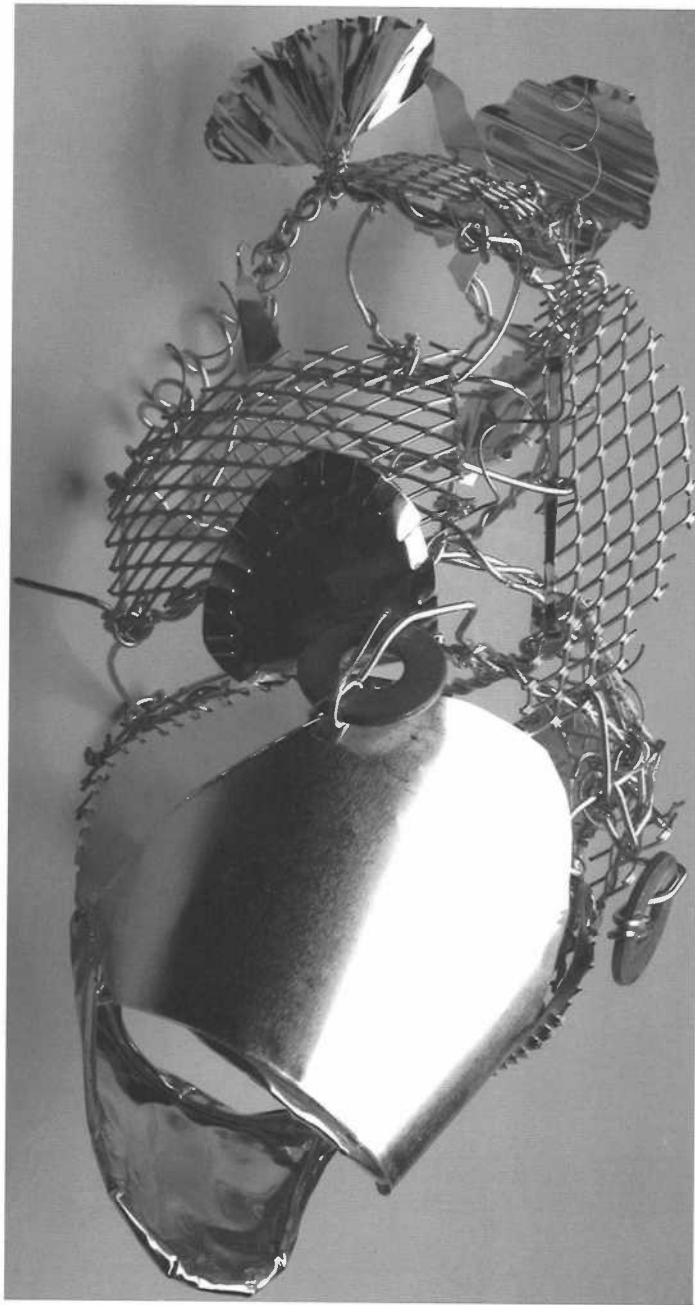
By Eric Penney

Still water on the lake produces a deafening silence,
bugs dancing to their own song.
Line snaking through the water,
down below a symphony all its own.

The aquatic ballet continuing on its course,
suddenly the water erupts in applause.
The concert is far from over.
The band starts playing slow at first,

erratic movements the hallmark.
Up and down, in and out, the band plays.
The conductor knows it could be a masterpiece.
The real test of skill is now!

The conductor struggles to set the pace
straining to contain a rogue orchestra.
Catching the notes, he gains control. Encore!
The performance of a lifetime...but no one was at the show.



Aluminum Wire with Found Objects and Flashing
Jason Foshey
Bass

A Feral Life

By Deidre Hopkins

Look at us so wild and free.
Just like us you wish to be
Racing, playing by the bogs,
Leaping over the tallest logs.

Look at us, without fright.
We won't be scared by any plight.
We roam the sacred forest by day—
Never into your world we stray,

For adults can be cold and cruel
And to you we are the fools
To believe one can live in harmony
With creatures of the land and sea,

That we can be happy with what we've got
And not in pursuit of what's new and "hot."
Adults spend too much time in misery
Slaving for things they will never see:

Gas for a car that is too immense
Then the bills to insure it— it makes no sense,
All because society says you must.
You give total strangers complete trust.

They cut the trees down long ago.
The animals had no place to go
And wound up in the city one night;
Each was shot without protest or fight.

Adults poisoned the air and sea
And at times a human I'm ashamed to be.
To see all the wickedness we are capable of
And, at the same time, compassion and love.

While some take pleasure in another's tears,
Others try to comfort and quiet the fears.
Because of the kindness people can bestow,
I don't feel so guilty letting my human face show.

But when the call of the wild is bayed at my door
I can't help but join in with a mighty feral roar!

Wise

By Kevin Fair

Is it true what they say?
Does every dog have his day,
or is the dog just lucky
after all others lose their way?

Do I do what I say
beat my own drum
sing my own song,
or am I just lip-synching?

False values of success
corrupt the mind.
Some avoid; others confess,
but the wise can attest

that only you
can truly measure
the extent of your success.
Have you been one of the wise?

The True Version

By Diana Pappas

"I have found the perfect woman for you to make your queen," I explained to the cloaked figure before me. We were standing in the immense throne room dwarfed by a massive cavern. There was a chill in the air that turned my breath to a thin fog. On either side of the room, windows stretched from the floor to the ceiling, like giant skeletal fingers supporting the arched roof. The red light that poured through the windows was a stark contrast to the black marble floor, walls, and ceiling. The king paced to the nearest window on the right wall.

"Melaina, why do you persist in this matter? I doubt your intentions. It is your nature to deceive and I will not be taken for a fool!"

"My Lord, I'm not here to lie to you."

I turned away, frustrated. Time was running out and I had to make him take action. Surveying the room, my eyes were drawn to the magnificent, solid gold thrones, each raised up twenty black marble steps to allow the occupants a clear view of the entire room. More eye-catching than their golden glow were the scenes of death, despair, murder, and suicide etched around their bases. My attention was caught by a panel in between the two thrones. It depicted the king waving his arm over a crowd, and those his arm had already passed over were dropping to the ground in their final throes.

"It must get lonely sitting up there all by yourself. At your age you should really think about settling down, maybe even having a few children." I waited for a response.

I had been working on him for weeks, dropping hints and slowly introducing this idea to him. He was in no rush to say anything, so I pressed on. "We need to move now if you want to see her. She really is quite breathtaking. Her beauty is known for miles. I'm surprised a lowly farmer could spawn such a flower." I took a few steps toward him, "It would be wise to see her now, while she's away from her family." I was about to add more to my description

when the king walked from the window towards the throne. He halted, then turned to face me. From under his hood I could make out a strong jaw line with skin as white as freshly bleached linen. His crystal blue eyes masked any emotions he might have been feeling. His hand betrayed that which his cool demeanor masked. He held a large gold piece which he flipped over and under each finger. The tick told me that he was considering my proposition.

"Are you sure that you do not want to be the one sitting up there with me?" he asked as he gestured towards the elaborate thrones.

"No, you deserve more; this girl is fit to be royalty, with her strong will and sharp mind. You know I would just cause tension and disputes. You need a delicate, quiet queen. Not only will she charm you, she will capture the hearts of your enemies. She is loyal—I have seen her soul. Once she is at your side, she will..."

"Fine. I will see her. But if I am disappointed, you will forfeit your chance to rule at my side, and you will suffer for your lies," he hissed. Turning, he headed towards the main hall. Since I was in no position to argue, I followed.

I was surprised how easy it was to get him to come with me. Once I got him out in the fresh air, I could work my magic on him. The plan was to get him to be so enchanted by her beauty he would steal her away without even speaking to her family. What he didn't know was that she wasn't a farmer's daughter; she was much more important than he could imagine.

I had heard it was wrong to lie, especially to a king, but it was my nature. My creator brought me to life with the air of a lie. Since that day, it has been my purpose to wreak havoc on his enemies. We had been plotting revenge on this king for years.

From the moment we arrived at the outskirts of the clearing, I was overwhelmed by an intoxicating aroma. There were flowers of every color and shape imaginable. One in particular that caught my attention was a large lily-like bloom just a few feet from me. Its periwinkle-blue petals were shaped like diamonds. In the middle of it was a blood red bulb that emitted the most putrid stench it reminded me of myself: a wolf in sheep's clothing. The field was wonderful, but the creature standing in the center outshone all of it.

The young woman was too busy picking flowers to notice that she was no longer alone. Even in a simple linen dress, a gold rope tied around her waist and her hair unkempt, she looked elegant. She looked as beautiful and feral as the Queen of the Amazons. Judging by her brown complexion and her sun-bleached hair, she spent as many days outside in the sun as the king spent hidden away in his black marble fortress.

I turned to the king just in time to see a smile touch the corner of his mouth. "So you are pleased with her looks?" I asked, already knowing the answer.

"Yes, I cannot believe that I doubted you. I thought for sure you were trying to trick me, but I was wrong. She is just as beautiful as you promised," he answered, never taking his eyes off the woman.

"Will you be speaking to her family?" Knowing that his response could ruin my whole scheme, I held my breath waiting for his answer.

"You tell me, is this a trap?"

"No, my Lord, it would be stupid to try to fool you. I may lie, but I have never swindled you."

"Yes, Melaina, you have yet to deceive me. If this is a trick, I will kill you."

"Are you going to speak to her family?"

"No, I will take her back to the palace immediately; you will go tell her family. Make sure to let them know that it is a blessing for her to receive this opportunity," he said over his shoulder as he walked towards her. The grass and flowers he moved over shriveled up and turned to ash.

As he approached her, she looked up from her work. At first she smiled at the sight of a companion, but when she saw the nature of this unannounced figure, her smile was replaced with a look of shock. She dropped the flowers she had picked and began to back away. He held out his hand and she was stopped by an invisible force that left her quivering and watching helplessly as he slowly advanced. The situation reminded me of a cobra hypnotizing its prey as it slowly slithers in for the kill. When he got within a foot of her he stopped and demanded, "What is your name?"

"P...P...Persephone," she answered with an unsteady voice.

"Persephone, I am Hades, Lord of the Underworld, King of the Dead. I have come to make you my queen." And in one fluid motion he pulled her into his embrace.

She screamed, "Wait! You don't..." but it was too late. The couple was consumed by iridescent green flames, and when the smoke cleared they were gone.

As I relaxed for the first time in weeks, I thought about the last step to my plan. I lived, and still live, for mayhem. I thrive on it. My plot was to create conflict, and there is no better conflict than when a goddess is scorned.

I didn't have to wait long, only an hour. In a swirl of pink smoke, Demeter appeared. Even though she was smaller than her daughter, she possessed just as much beauty. She surveyed the field, eyes resting on me with a quizzical look. "Where is my daughter?" Impatience bubbled up as the impact of my presence registered.

"I have found her a husband, you should thank me."

"Where is she?!" she screamed, as she turned to find where I had hidden her daughter. "If you don't give her back, I'll kill all of the crops! I won't fertilize anything and people will die!" Her fists clenched as the rage took over her body, "I will tell Zeus! You do know he is her father, right?! He will punish you if you don't bring her back right now!"

"She's with her new husband, I can't bring her back. You're going to have a *hell* of a time finding her," I mused as I disappeared into a fury of black flames.

What a productive month! My goal was to rearrange the lives of three gods, Hades, Demeter, and Persephone. I was thrilled when I heard Zeus was going to be dragged into the mix—it almost brought a tear to my eye. Then I realized I was responsible for winter and the suffering of millions, and that just made my whole body tingle.

Prevail

By Tara Jean Goffart

The rush of intrigue pulls me in
I can see the eye of the storm
Watching, planning, I count the seconds
I'm seconds from my own self-destruction
Its wind whips me in circles
Up I go into its magnificent spiral

Toying with me, it spins me in circles
Then it carelessly shoots me out from its reins
and waits calmly and patiently
for another chance to scoop me back up
But I will be cautious the next time
It won't catch me off guard

I was vulnerable and naïve
but my senses are stronger
My wall is built
and I'm untouchable
Let's see that storm get me now!

Food for Thought

By Anna Gunning

"Food for Thought" was one of the first-place winners in this year's First-Year Writing Prize Competition.

It's interesting, isn't it? Whenever my life seems to be going perfectly, you just have to come back into it. I don't mean for it to sound unwelcoming, but I guess that's what it is. You always tell me I'm not good enough. I'm afraid your constant laughter as I look into the mirror has gotten old. Your satanic words of fear have slurred into my ears for far too long. You always have that look of disgust on your face as I bite into my apple pieces. Are apples too fattening for you?

I read online once that some anorexics see their disease as a person. I don't know what I see you as. If anything, I think you're more of a monster than a person. Think about it: what person in their right mind would constantly tell someone they're too fat, too lazy, too stubborn.... Then again, I'm not exactly in my right mind....

It's weird to think this all started with a slice of pizza. I was sixteen at the time and had never really noticed the fat content in one single slice. My mother, however, immediately asked why I was eating such a grotesque substance. Since pizza and cheerleading don't go together, I had to choose one or the other. That's when I met you. You told me to throw away the pizza and run a mile. *And I did.*

And I felt awful.

And you only wanted more.

That's the thing about you. You're never completely satisfied. Do you remember that day when I spent four whole hours at the gym and didn't eat a single thing? I was in the middle of a breakdown, and all you did was watch me scream. You wouldn't let me eat anything, not even that 90 calorie Special K bar. The only thing you did was laugh. You laughed at my vulnerability. You laughed at my weakness. You laughed because I couldn't.

You still weren't satisfied with me though.

And I was only 97 pounds then.

I'll always remember the day I tried to leave you. It was just after New Year and I was so tired of it all. I hadn't eaten any holiday candy. I had even refused to eat that holiday ham dinner with my extended family. I tried to eat it, but I couldn't. No matter how many times I lifted my fork, I just couldn't get rid of you. The holidays are supposed to be a time of happiness and smiles and food. It was because of you that I spent mine in an empty depression. You're always the reason why my life has to be so abnormal.

You're also the reason why I cause so many people to suffer. My mother, as usual, yelled for me to eat something. She begged me to just have some mashed potatoes or some corn.... I guess she doesn't realize that both contain way too much butter. Everything in this fucking world seems to contain too much butter.

Or too much chocolate.

Or too much something.

Anyways, I ran up to my room and locked the door. You and I were all alone then. I guess you're the kind of monster that likes to get me alone in my room. Have I ever told you how incredibly selfish you are? All you ever do is take, take, take! Well, I'm damn tired of all your taking! You have robbed me of my happiness, my weight, and my life. Why won't you just leave me alone?!

I'm sorry...I should never have yelled. I know you only want what's best for me, but how can hunger pains and constant headaches be what's best? Although it's worth seeing the scale numbers decrease, I don't know how much weakness my body can tolerate. I don't even brush my hair anymore. It's gotten so brittle since I dropped under 90. A lot of bad things have happened since I lost this weight.

When I was 140, my life seemed perfect. I was athletic, outgoing, and sleeping with different guys each weekend. The only thing I sleep with now is my scale. I guess that's why I remain so loyal to you, because I know you only want the best for me in the end. If I eat that chocolate-covered donut or that creamy tomato soup, then I will gain twenty pounds and lose the men's interest. Here's the thing though...I haven't had a boyfriend in over two

months. The last guy I dated told me I was too skinny. He said it freaked him out that I wouldn't eat. He even counted my ribs once to show me just how "sick" I was. He asked me to choose between him and the anorexia.

I chose you.

I don't know why, but I chose you.

I guess I just know that you're there for me. You were there when my parents separated. You were there when I was expelled from school. You were there when I waited nervously in the abortion clinic. I honestly never thought that refusing one slice of pizza would ultimately change my whole outlook on life.

So where am I supposed to go now? I can't go to dinner. I can't go to the bar. I can't go out with my friends. My only friend and comfort now is you. Most people won't associate with an anorexic. It makes them feel uncomfortable and everything.

But you get it.

You always get it.

*You get it because you **are** the anorexia.*

It's interesting, isn't it? That whenever my life seems to be going so horribly the only answer you give me is silence.

On the Sidewalk

By Steve Tagarelis

Pacing down a busy street
wearing a suit of cliché
he's focused on himself—
it's just another day.

He doesn't see the colors
of billboards and street signs.
He doesn't see the shiny paint
of cars parked in a line.

I think he's deaf to the music
of the city's pulsing sounds.
There are no birds, no sirens
or even voices in the crowd.

But maybe for one moment
as we two pass each other
he'll hear all the songs
and he'll see all the color.

And I'll thank him for the image
of what I'll never be.
"Excuse me," he says
as he knocks into me.

Toxicity Behind the Smile

By Brittany Capozzi

*The facial expression of a loved one paints itself into a joyful grin,
but beware, because behind it may be where the voiceless lies hide.*

When you glance at your reflection in the mirror do you see yourself as someone else? Do the lines around your eyes show wisdom that is inevitably aging, or do they unmask fresh lies from the core of your heart? There's an apparent similarity between you and the mirror; both seem to be withering away into a different image. You attempt to polish the picture, but it's not so easy, is it? To obliterate what is seen at the surface does not omit what is seared on the inside.

Yet, you smile.

Labeling is a negative judgment call, but you are indeed known as a "Good Guy." Do those favors you offer truly stay fresh or have they gone stale? You keep busy day after day, season after season. Your patience grows thinner, turning into a single thread through the years, as does time.

Still, you smile.

As unsentimental as you are, you ironically corner your secret of hurting, too, don't you? Hurting...not yourself but those close to you.

Your footprints have been scarred into my backbone, making the full support I once had shatter into fragments of neglect.

You smile.

Do you believe in the perfect love coming to an end? No evidence has shown that it does; however, the passing of time clarifies that it happens to the best of us. Marriages evaporate into thin air these days as puppy love denies itself years later. Or does it? Does the love for something created evanesce?

You keep your smile,
while deceitfully appearing honest.

Just because the words are not written on the blank page doesn't mean they are not there in your mind. Keep smiling, show off your pearly, "polished" teeth. Let the clown mask drown out your thoughts so I won't hear them.

But I do.

As I distance myself from you,
I too smile.

Damage! Damage Control!

By Jonathan Bowers

What do we do, Coach!

That's what this picture says,
player holding on to me for dear life.
Coach, what do we do?

Curry in Bold on the Chest,
Curry faded in the background.
Rain of sweat falling down,
showing the work of destruction
just like I did to the rest.

The huge Jokerish smile as if I'm still plotting,
plotting how much more havoc to cause.
Don't let the smile fool you,
your basketball record will smell worse—
matter of fact, it'll be rotting.

We can't stop him.

Maybe we can contain him.

He's causing too much damage....

That's it, we need Damage Control!

Tomorrow Is Never Promised

By Peguy Lebrun

"Tomorrow Is Never Promised" received Honorable Mention in this year's First-Year Writing Prize Competition.

It may sound weird, but I think I am protected by God, because I have dodged so many near-accidents and life-threatening situations throughout my life. I have never cheated death or anything of that sort, but I believe things happen for a reason. When they do happen, you are not supposed to speak of them because the near-accidents just might occur for real. The accident when a neighborhood thug pointed a gun to my brother Emmanuel's face made me realize that nothing is for sure and tomorrow is never promised.

When growing up in the "ghetto," you are exposed to many treacherous dealings. Experiencing near-deaths is usually a part of that environment. Many people on the outside looking in have a stereotypical notion that everyone that comes from or lives in the "ghetto" is a thug or gang-affiliated. What they do not know is that there are many positive and humble people that either come from or live there. And if you are one of those positive people, you probably grew up playing either basketball or football. Being a part of either of those two activities was a motivation to stay away from joining a gang. For my friends, my brother Emmanuel, and me, basketball was definitely our motivation. But one day, the neighborhood gang came to us.

One summer day when I was about eight years old, my brother, who's only four years older, and I were playing basketball at the neighborhood basketball court. At the court, the gang members would hang out and some would play. We were playing two-on-two basketball against anyone who wanted to play. The rule was the losing team had to step off the court while the winner stayed on to play the next team. My brother and I kept winning, and we were on a streak. The more we won the more physical the opponents played. Think about it: if you were a teenager or a grown man losing to an eight- and twelve-year-old, you would get mad, too. Soon, two people who were part of the street gang, who were watching us beat everyone, wanted to play. One was named Mike, who was about my brother's age, and the other was Jamal; he was about eighteen years old. They stepped onto the

court with their shirts off, shorts hanging low, and they walked with a mean demeanor. These boys were known to be tough. Before the game even started, Mike made it known that they were representing their gang and they were not going to lose. "Check ball," I said to start the game. During the game everyone could tell they did not want to lose to some kids. They started throwing elbows, holding our shirts, anything to win. My brother came up and told me to suck it up and to only shoot the ball. That way, I would not get hit while driving to the basket. After he said that, I did not hesitate and shots were falling. We went up by four points, and the game was up to eleven.

Finally, we had game point and only needed one point to win the game. My brother passed me the ball and I took the shot; SWISH! We won the game. Next thing I know, a ball was thrown, aimed at my brother's face. Mike had thrown the ball at him out of anger. My brother moved at the last second to dodge the ball. Then Mike walked towards the park bench and picked something up. No one knew what he was picking up because his back was towards the crowd. As he turned around, he quickly pointed the gun to my brother's face and no one moved. The playground was filled with silence. Click! Click! He pulled the trigger but nothing came out. I felt my heart drop to the floor. As the whole world stopped, Mike stood there confused, and another gang member ran by, snatched the gun away and ran. Everyone snapped back into reality, and the court became empty as they ran. But there I stood, still dazed at what just happened. My brother had to pull me by my hand to make me run home.

Time was not the only thing that stood still as a trigger was pulled point blank of my brother's face. My whole body stood still, especially my heart. Who would have ever thought you could be taking your last breath over a basketball game. My experiencing something that horrific at such a young age made me believe in the old saying, "Live today like it's your last because tomorrow is never promised." This experience made me somewhat sensitive to the feelings of those I do not know or trust because I do not know how they might react. This experience also made me closer to my brother and to those that I love because I am afraid of losing them over pettiness such as this. Not getting into petty arguments with strangers is what I do today, because I want to live to see tomorrow.

Grace

By Debra Casallas

Grace, dear Lord, please walk with me
Grace, dear God, don't abandon me
On that fertile path of choice and chance
When fate is cruel, steady my stance

Beyond reproach I have not been
Youth, at times, scathed my honor thin
But honor is like flesh, you know
And although blemished can heal and grow

In the midst of man's most mortal wounds
With Grace, dear God, shall I see life through

Chill Time

By Brian Mason

World, you're tuned out
As I sit with my headphones in.
I let the melody cool me,
The lyrics move me,
And I chill as the harmony soothes me.
I chill as the harmony flows through my veins
And tingles my head,
My headphones the IV
Possessing a healthy dose of musical meds.
I chill.
I chill as one of them hits the high notes that make me believe
I can sing, I can dance, I can do anything.
Anything, and if my voice doesn't climb to that same peak,
I still sing, as the music's within me.
I sing as their five voices blend to one, one that blends with mine.
I sing as I am in sync with their tone,
I sing with my soul, body and mind.
I sing.
And as I sing my eyes are blind, as I see with my ears,
I feel with my ears,
I smell, I taste, I hear with my ears.
My ears are a portal to an escape, an escape from you
World, you're tuned out
As I sit with my headphones in.
I don't have to see you, or hear you, or feel you.
I can just chill, and sing.
I sing,
As I sit with my headphones in.

A Home Away

By Diana Pappas

Home is where the heart is.
My home is mobile,
It goes to class,
It visits me often.
My home makes me comfortable,
Home is where I feel safe.

Before my heart had a home
I did not know what home meant.
False emotions,
False pretense,
I could not tell what was real.
Before my heart had a home I was lost.

Now I know love,
The true emotion I feel
Runs from my heart,
Runs to my home.
The true love I feel,
Now that I know him.

Letter to an Enemy

By Brian Mason

You know you think you know what's best,
I know you know you think it.
I know you think you've reached a point
Where your ship is far from sinking.

But a vicious storm is up ahead
And your ship is heading for it.
You're on a fatal path to self-destruction,
And I know you can't endure it.

You have your wits and charms about you,
But those will soon subside.
Within your heart is strength and love
But pain will soon reside.

Ignore the truth that's placed before you,
Or make the choice to embrace it.
A hard decision's your only choice,
And only you can make it.

All along you've held your tongue
And turned the other cheek.
But ignorance has done you harm
Now that truth is at your feet.

You think and act with your heart first.
Now nothing is the same.
You put her first, now that same heart hurts
And only you're to blame.

You've had a chance to change your path
But fear has held you back.
You're doing wrong, remove this from
Your life; keep self intact.

I cannot look into the mirror
For fear of what I'll see.
Dear Diary, I write this letter
To myself, my own worst enemy.

"You" by "Me"

By Steve Tagarelis

You're a hard-hitting boxer
in the championship bout
One look at you, and I'm knocked out

Your eyes cut through me
like Jack the Ripper
Yet they're always shining, like the Big Dipper

You're handcuffs on a prisoner
keeping me in place

You're a sweet guitar riff
I'll play bass

You're a calm summer night
so tranquil and warm
You're the quiet before every storm

You're a sharp tack
I can't get enough
Wearing a conceited smile as you call my bluff

You're the parachute ripcord
breaking my fall

You're a box of Oreos
and I want them all

You're a pretty painting
maybe a Van Gogh
A beautiful face, unlike a Picasso

You're the end of the yellow brick road
so play the Wizard's part
and give the Tinman back his heart

Are You Afraid of Forever?

By Donna Schlieper

I hear you say

I love you.

I hear it every day.

But what does it mean?

Can you really

completely love me?

Love my faults,

My tics?

What about my annoying habits

Or my oddities?

Can you stand to be with me?

Can you get over my imperfections?

So if you stay. . .

For how long will that be?

Weeks. . .

Months. . .

Years. . .

Forever. . .

Are you afraid of forever?

I am.

Our Nature

By Debra Casallas

The lesser part of man, our physiology

The driving force of nature

A survival strategy

And without doubt, a fearsome force

This biological pull

Where strength will win, and in the end

Blood will rule

The greater part of man, our divinity

The driving force of conscience

A moral capacity

And without doubt, a formidable choice

To see a stranger as your own

But to this end, humanity wins

And the essence of God is known

Naledi

By Kathryn King

"Naledi" was one of the first-place winners in this year's First-Year Writing Prize Competition.

The acacia trees scatter through the miles of endless grasslands. The majority of the plants here are hard-leaf evergreens with fine, needle-like leaves. None are delicate to the touch, but firm and strong, much like all wildlife and civilization in South Africa. White rhino and hyena hide within the overgrown grass, waiting for their prey. Giraffes are clearly visible as they gnaw on the genus mimosa trees, with their unique black tongues entangling the skinny branches. Open woven baskets balance on the heads of several women from the town. Fragile-bodied children walk alongside, trying to keep up with their mothers' long strides.

It is nearly seven o'clock in the morning, and the sun is slowly rising to its peak. Gradually the temperature increases, and an unbearable heat wave slows the movement of all wildlife. Still, all sorts of families from the community continue walking along the trail through the overgrown grass. The trail seems endless as I walk uncomfortable in my oversized khaki cargo pants. I take the handkerchief from my pocket and wipe the pools of sweat dripping from my forehead. As I walk behind a woman holding her baby in a multi-colored floral sash, I begin to get a closer look at a bland white building ahead. I cup my hands around my eyes to block out the sun, and I begin to see a universal red cross on the front of this modest building. Finally, I have arrived at the infirmary.

As I get closer, I see dozens of people sitting on benches lined against the building wall. The capacity of the building looks not much larger than a classroom. I file past the families with sorrowful looks upon their faces. Many have large bags underneath their eyes. Dust and dirt line their faces, and their black hair is frizzy and untamed. I look into their eyes and see that they are drained of energy as they patiently wait for their turn to enter the infirmary. Even the children aren't carrying bright smiles and fresh attitudes. They sit motionless and blank as they stare off into the distance. As the families talk amongst themselves quietly, many give me curious looks. I inch towards the entrance of the building, swiftly sliding through the groups of people.

I finally make it to the front of the line, and I am immediately ushered in by a woman with full white attire. As I get a closer look, I realize the person leading me inside is a nurse. She has weathered brown skin and is wearing a long-sleeved button-up shirt and a white skirt that reaches just beyond her knees. Her broad shoulders seem disproportional to her petite body. The debilitated look upon her face is uncannily similar to that of many of the patients I had witnessed just a few moments earlier.

"You must be the volunteer nurse from the Peace Corps. Change into your uniform and start taking samples." The nurse says this so quickly that she takes a long breath afterwards. I nod my head, take the white uniform that she is holding out in front of her, and change behind a blanket tacked to the wall. As I walk out from behind the blanket, I notice new patients are lying motionless in the parallel beds vertically placed within the room.

I spot an adolescent girl sitting upright against the wall in the corner. Her dark skin contrasts with her light brown raggedy dress. Emerald eyes take the stage in her oval-shaped face. The girl's mouth remains slightly ajar as she views the other patients around her. She looks frightened. From a distance I can see her body is slightly shaking from being nervous. Her arms are clenching her legs tightly, making her fingertips appear lighter from losing blood circulation. I slowly walk towards her. She takes a quick glance at me and then immediately turns her head away. She is timid. I sit on her bed and give her a slight smile. The girl nods her head. Without telling her my purpose, she understands. Nothing can be lost in translation, because the young girl understands that many people are sick and she might be sick too. What I'm not sure of is whether or not she understands what this disease might be.

As I show her the needle into which I will be drawing her blood, she cringes. Her emerald eyes disappear within the wrinkles of her dark skin. I place my arm around her back, hoping to comfort her. I just want to tell her everything will be okay. But I'm not even certain of that. If the results are positive for HIV AIDs, then who am I to tell her everything will be okay? I rub an antiseptic wipe along the inner part of her arm. Her arm is still shaking slightly. I draw the blood quickly and effortlessly, and apply pressure as I place a band-aid on her arm. Within a day I will know the results that will forever change her life. As I walk away with the blood sample, I peer over my shoulder. The girl is still

sitting, vulnerable as ever. She is now hugging her knees. Her eyes are glistening.

I label the blood sample with a name that was identical to the name tag that girl was wearing. Her name tag read: "Naledi." What a beautiful name, so unique and so gentle. I place the sample of blood within the dozens of other samples from other patients. The plastic container sits between a sample labeled: "Tumelo" and another that reads: "Uuka" - names of other patients. I can't help but wonder about the results. I want to determine Naledi's outcome, a positive or negative. I can't imagine not knowing if I have a fatal disease, the same disease that is demolishing the people, my people. I can't envision my neighbors, friends, and family getting wiped out one by one, day by day. When will it stop? When will the pain go away? It must be so difficult living each day with your loved ones, knowing this might be the last day you will have left with them.

I stare at her blood sample sitting in a clear plastic container. It looks so simple and so innocent. Yet this small sample of blood will determine how long she will live. I trace my fingers along the edges of the container. My first thought is to wish Naledi luck. But luck is not the point, and not what she'll need to survive. Naledi will need to take several antiretroviral drugs (ARVs) every day. She will never be cured from HIV AIDS, but this treatment will enable her to live longer. My mind races.

I wish her the hope that she strongly deserves. I yearn for her to have the opportunity to live, and to experience life the way that I have. I hope for the best. As I slowly walk away from the table, I glimpse over at Naledi. Now the young girl is standing with her family. Her mother is caressing her head. Naledi is playing with her baby brother, who is wrapped in a royal blue cloth. For the first time, I see Naledi smile. Her teeth appear bright white against her dark skin. For now the worry is over. She looks so content with her family. Within a year or two all this may change. But at this very moment Naledi is happy, oh so happy.

A Green Poem

By Tara Jean Goffart

On a mission, looking for nature's sui generis
I parked on new ground leaving everything behind
but my vision and camera

With each snapshot I felt closer to my surroundings
Feeling the breeze and hearing the way the wind whistled through the grass
sent feelings of home and joy through my body

I picked a flower and placed it delicately in my hair. Walking on
I passed through an unfathomable amount of flowers, each brilliant in color
I had to take a breath, for I could tell I was about to lose myself

I came to the end of my journey and I finally found it
Simple as it was, it made so much sense

A hundred pictures later and it all came down to the meadows that danced across the hill





CONTRIBUTORS' NOTES



SHANNON ALSEM-CASHMAN

Shannon Alsem-Cahsman is a senior Psychology major from Milton, Massachusetts.

JONATHAN BOWERS

Jonathan Bowers is a senior Information Technology major from Kalamazoo, Michigan. Over the last eight years, he has been writing and performing poetry inspired by personal and family experiences. He played on the Championship Curry Basketball team in 2008.

MEREDITH BYERS

Previously a Psychology/ Biology major, Meredith Byers has recently switched to English with a minor in Psychology. She is leaning toward a career as a paramedic or firefighter and hopes to actively volunteer in these fields before graduating. In her free time, she enjoys writing, reading, singing, and hiking.

BRITTANY CAPOZZI

Brittany Capozzi is a junior majoring in English. She chose to discuss the impact of the written word in American society from different aspects for her Honors thesis. In her spare time she exercises her brain by studying an eclectic variety of subjects, such as music theory, singing, literature, and philosophy.

DEBRA CASALLAS

Debra Casallas received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Communication with a minor in Psychology from Curry College in May 2008. She has owned and managed a childcare business for eleven years, but returned to school to complete her degree and pursue a new path in communications. She and her husband Richard have two children, Richard II and Julie, who continually inspire them to do better and are a steady source of joy.

ALEX CHEPLICK

Alex Cheplick loves the Zen. He goes by the Buddha flow toward the mind, body, and soul. If things happen, they happen for a reason.

CHRISTOPHER DORMAN

A May 2008 graduate, Christopher Dorman majored in Visual Arts with a concentration in Studio Arts; he focused primarily on charcoal drawings.

KEVIN FAIR

Kevin Fair is a Politics and History major from Natick, Massachusetts. Kevin plays football and hopes to become a history teacher after graduation.

JASON FOSHEY

Jason Foshey is a twenty-six-year-old student from Johnston, Rhode Island. He is majoring in Psychology and minoring in Visual Arts.

TARA JEAN GOFFART

Tara Jean Goffart attended Curry College during the 2007-2008 academic year. She is currently a sophomore Psychology major at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell who enjoys taking photographs on the side.

ANNA GUNNING

Anna Gunning is from a family of ten and carries a journal with her so she can write at any time. She was inspired to write "Food for Thought" because of anorexia's psychological impact; she wanted to put it out there for people to think about.

DEIDRE HOPKINS

Deidre Hopkins is twenty years old and a Criminal Justice major. Her poem "A Feral Life" was inspired by a day at Winslow Farm, a non-profit organization for abused and abandoned animals (www.winslowfarm.com). Deidre has been volunteering at Winslow Farm for almost eight years.

KRISTIN HUBBARD

Kristin Hubbard is a junior Information Technology major/ Graphic Design minor from Carver, Massachusetts. In her spare time, she enjoys reading and writing.

GILLIAN HYNES

From Randolph, Massachusetts, Gillian Hynes is a senior Visual Arts major with a concentration in Studio Arts and a minor in Politics and History.

JEPHTHE JOSEPH

Jephthe Joseph is a senior Graphic Design major from Braintree, Massachusetts.

MARISA KENNEY

Marisa Kenney, this year's cover artist, is a Visual Arts major from Framingham, Massachusetts.

KATHRYN KING

Kathryn King, a sophomore from Cape Elizabeth, Maine, is a Nursing major. Her short story "Naledi" was inspired by her admiration of the nursing profession and her interest in the Peace Corps. She believes that HIV AIDS is an important topic to show light on.

PEGUY LEBRUN

Peguy Lebrun is a sophomore from Boston, Massachusetts.

NANCY MAROTTA

Nancy Marotta is currently a junior majoring in Nursing. Pottery is one of her passions; she has been pursuing it for the past four years and hopes to continue for years to come!

CATHERINE MARTIN

From Abington, Massachusetts, Catherine Martin graduated in May 2008 with a degree in Nursing. In the immediate future, she is interested in working as a critical care nurse. She also plans to return to Curry to complete a Master's in Nursing so she can teach. She enjoys spending time with her family, her friends, and her boyfriend. She also enjoys working in ceramics and finds it a great stress reliever.

BRIAN MASON

Originally from Farmingdale, New York, Brian Mason went to high school in Lexington, Massachusetts and later moved to Coral Springs, Florida. He has been writing poetry and songs since elementary school and loves expressing himself through writing. He graduated in May 2008 with a major in Communication and is currently pursuing a Master of Fine Arts degree in Acting at Roosevelt University in Chicago.

ED MEGA

Ed Mega graduated in May 2008 with a major in Communication.

ANDREA MELCHIORRI

Andrea Melchiorri is a sophomore Graphic Design major.

MICHELLE MORGAN

Michelle Morgan is a senior Communication major/ English minor. She resides in Holbrook, Massachusetts and just finished an internship with a publishing company in Boston. She is an assistant editor to the *Currier Times* and is secretary of Lambda Pi Eta.

GREG NASCA

After completing his first Bachelor of Arts degree and pursuing a non-creative professional business career, Greg Nasca returned to the studio for the first time in five years during the Spring 2008 semester. He is excited to continue on this fall as a traditional student working towards a degree in Graphic Design and Visual Arts. The two pieces included in this edition mark the first showing and publication of his work.

DIANA PAPPAS

Diana Pappas is a senior from Westwood, Massachusetts. She is an English major who plans on one day publishing a novel.

ERIC PENNEY

Eric Penney was born in 1986 A.D. and raised by Norman and Linda Penney, who are the best parents ever! He graduated from Auburn High School in 2004, and after plugging away at his studies at Curry College, graduated in May 2008 with a major in Criminal Justice. His plans for life after college include living in the woods of Maine, emerging only to watch Sox and Pats games.

ISABELLE RENE

A May 2008 graduate with a major in Psychology, Isabelle Rene (aka Izzy) is the Vice President of her graduating class. She served as a Resident Assistant for three years and as a Speech Associate for two years, attending two annual Speaking Center conferences and presenting at the North Carolina conference. She also served as an Orientation Leader for incoming first-year students and as a first-year mentor and had parts in the Curry Theater's productions of *An Abominable Affair* and *A Perfect Match*. She is very involved in everything she does and enjoys every part of it.

KASEY RICHARDS

Kasey Richards graduated with honors in May 2008 with a major in Graphic Design. An active member of the Alexander Graham Bell Honors Society, she also received the Curry Fine and Applied Arts Award for her work in the Graphic Design field. She has had several works published for events at Curry and at her place of employment. She is currently interning at a Graphic Design firm and hopes to pursue a full-time career in the arts.

DANIEL BRADY ROACH

Daniel Brady Roach is an English Major going into his final year. He has a passion for books and writing and aspires to become a writer of novels and novellas after he graduates. His favorite literary genres are horror, science fiction, and fantasy, and he is a fan of authors such as Anne Rice, Laurel K. Hamilton, and Steven Brust. When he is not writing, he enjoys watching movies and anime, as well as reading novels, comics, and manga.

DONNA SCHLIEPER

Donna Schlieper, a sophomore from Scarborough, Maine, is a Communication major concentrating on Public Relations. When she is not doing schoolwork or writing, Donna enjoys spending time with her family and friends. She would also like to thank everyone who has ever given her inspiration or encouragement to write.

AMANDA SURETTE

Amanda Surette attended Curry College during the 2007-2008 academic year. She is currently a sophomore at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.

STEVE TAGARELIS

A songwriter from Waltham, Massachusetts, Steve Tagarelis is a senior Communication major with concentrations in both TV and Radio. He enjoys writing and writes poetry in order to help his song lyrics. His strongest influences both musically and lyrically are Elliott Smith, The Beatles, and Pavement.

SARAH TOWER-DUKESHIRE

Art has always been a part of Sarah Tower-Dukeshire's life. Her grandmother is a wonderful painter and her mother is a successful glass artist. She personally likes to work with mixed media. She makes art because she enjoys it. Most of all, she does it to have some time to herself and relax. As of right now, she is at Curry part-time with only two more classes until graduating. She thanks her husband and parents for all their support throughout her Curry career.

PAUL VARGA

Mostly known for his voice on WMLN, Paul Varga rarely gets the chance to show that a voice can resonate just as much on paper as it can on the radio. Coming into his senior year, he feels that it's time to show both. With his days at Curry slowly coming to a close, he plans on entering a career in talk radio. Wherever that may be, he will take along all the experiences, the encounters, and the life lessons that have made his time at Curry one that has educated and enriched him as a human being.

Curry Arts Journal Submission Guidelines

All Curry students are invited to submit quality poems, short stories, essays, script excerpts, and artwork on paper for consideration by a student/faculty panel. Submission deadlines occur at the end of the fall and spring semesters. Up to three submissions per person per semester will be reviewed. Each submission must be accompanied by a submission form. Forms are available in Drapkin Student Center, Levin Library, the Academic and Performance Center, Hafer, and Kennedy Buildings, and the Faculty Building. Please staple or paper-clip a completed form to each submission and include your name on the back of the work. Do not include your name anywhere on the front of the piece (with the exception of artwork). Cover design submissions must include the word *Curry* in the Trajan font in keeping with the college standards for print publications. Prose pieces must be double-spaced. We strongly suggest that you have your literary pieces edited and proofread by a faculty member or an Essential Skills tutor before turning them in to the *Curry Arts Journal*.

Submissions can be sent or delivered to the *Curry Arts Journal* mailbox on the first floor of the Faculty Building. If your work is accepted, you will be notified ASAP and be asked to send us a MS Word formatted disk and/or email attachment of your entry.

For more information, please contact Karen D'Amato at ext. 2157 or at kdamato@curry.edu. We look forward to hearing from you!

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